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Teachers strike back

THE PARTY WITH THE HOLE IN THE MIDDLE

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New Statesman

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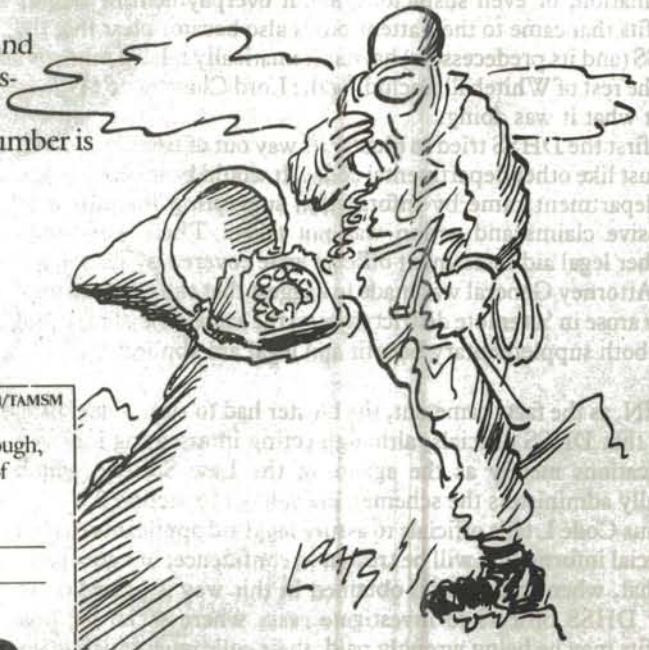

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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2776 1 June 1984

Whitehall law-breakers

LAST FRIDAY, as everyone was clearing off for another Bank Holiday weekend, the government slipped out a little announcement — by way of a written answer to a Parliamentary Question. It hoped no one would much notice — the traditional method and timing for a statement when Whitehall is trying to avoid embarrassment.

But this time it was more than just embarrassment. It was an admission that for years officials of the DHSS concerned with legal aid had been subjected to incitement and been part of a conspiracy to commit a crime. The admission came from Dr Rhodes Boyson, the Social Services Minister. His Secretary of State Norman Fowler, he wrote, 'has issued instructions that the authority for legal aid assessment officers to pass information to other officers for purposes not specified in section 22(1) of the Legal Aid Act 1974 has been suspended'. Something had changed Dr Boyson's mind, for barely a fortnight earlier he had told the House of Commons that he was satisfied that his department was complying with section 22.

So what is this section 22? The answer is that it is one of the very few specific bits of data protection on the statute book. It says that no information provided for the purposes of being means tested for legal aid in civil cases shall be passed on to others for any purpose without the permission of the person involved. It is a criminal offence to do so.

Between Dr Boyson's two contradictory statements, the Legal Action Group and the *Observer* revealed the existence of an official DHSS code that *instructs* civil servants to break this law. It is the DHSS *Legal Aid Instructions*, or Code L and is a classified document.

The revelation was that the Code *instructed* DHSS officials assessing legal aid applications to pass on to their colleagues any information, or even suspicions, about overpayment of welfare benefits that came to their attention. It also became clear that the DHSS (and its predecessors) have systematically misled ministers and the rest of Whitehall, including the Lord Chancellor's Office, about what it was doing.

At first the DHSS tried to bluster its way out of trouble. Code L was just like other departmental codes. It would be indefensible if the department came by information suggesting fraudulent or excessive claims and action was not taken. There was doubt whether legal aid assessment officers were covered by section 22. The Attorney General was made to suggest that the problem only really arose in 'a remote district (where) the same official may deal with both supplementary benefit and legal aid applications'.

THEN, as the facts came out, the bluster had to stop. Case law is clear that DHSS officials, although acting in assessing legal aid applications merely as the agents of the Law Society (which actually administers the scheme), *are* subject to section 22.

Thus Code L tells officials to assure legal aid applicants that all financial information will be treated in confidence, but goes on to say that, when information obtained in this way is passed on to other DHSS officers to investigate cases where social security benefits may be being wrongly paid, their colleagues must 'make separate enquiries to establish the facts without disclosing the source of their information, i.e. the legal aid application'.

It further transpired that an earlier attempt had been made to legalise the DHSS's illegal activity. In 1977 the Supplementary Benefits Commission (whose work the DHSS took over directly in 1980) suggested to a working party on legal aid that section 22 should be amended so as to allow legal aid information to be passed on for supplementary benefit purposes. Its representatives on the working party did not disclose that the Commission was already breaking the law which it was suggesting should be amended. When the working party firmly rejected the suggestion — on the grounds that it was essential for the administration of justice to preserve entirely confidential relations between solicitors and their clients — the Commission (and later the DHSS) simply went on breaking the law.

IT IS QUITE simply a disgraceful story. The DHSS is certainly right in claiming that the Code L is just like others in Whitehall. But that is the reverse of an argument about why it should be kept confidential. Those parts of the bureaucratic tome which set out the criteria of means tested assessments should be open to public scrutiny, as they constitute in effect secret 'sub-legislation' which no one can otherwise question. Those parts which concern officially sanctioned breaches of the law should be published for self-evident reasons.

What is essential is that this scandal is not now quietly buried by Dr Boyson and forgotten. The Attorney General has said that it would be difficult to prosecute individual civil servants who, in passing on information illegally, were only obeying instructions. It would clearly be unjust to make some junior official the scapegoat for systematic illegality. Code L, in one form or another has been in existence for some 30 years, so many civil servants and ministers are directly or indirectly responsible.

But there must, first, be a public enquiry to establish how this all came about and to establish who was responsible. A legal system that, for example, sends Sarah Tisdall to prison under the Official Secrets Act for no more serious offence than causing political embarrassment to the government, but which does nothing when the same Official Secrets Act is used to draw a veil over 30 years of official law breaking, is not a legal system that deserves respect. And there must, second, be renewed pressure for effective data protection laws and a Freedom of Information Act.

As a footnote, it is astonishing that the Law Society, on whose behalf the DHSS was supposed to be ensuring that solicitors' relationship of confidence with clients was maintained, has supinely failed to come up so far with any comment whatsoever on this criminal breach of confidence. □

FEMINIST PUBLISHING

To coincide with the Feminist Book Fair (7-9 June at Jubilee Hall, Covent Garden, London) next week's books pages will be offering:

● **Gillian Hanscombe** on feminist publishing ● **Sara Maitland** reviewing books by, for and about women ● **Jean Radford** on Juliet Mitchell's new book ● A report from the US by **Barbara Smith** ● Factual information about The Book Fair

To advertise in this special issue, telephone Michael Roberts or David Jones on 01-253 2001. Deadline for bookings 1 June.

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Nuclear convoy in nuclear-free zones

NUCLEAR WEAPONS are routinely being transported through heavily built-up areas, anti-nuclear campaigners and local reporters have discovered. Last Thursday, a convoy travelling from the Coulport Polaris missile depot on the Clyde was monitored as it left Scotland and later entered the centre of Leicester during the evening rush hour, en route to the nuclear weapons assembly and maintenance plant at Burghfield, near Reading. As last Thursday's convoy passed through Leicester it had to stop for school crossings — but determinedly ignored signs announcing the city to be a 'nuclear free zone'.

Since the secret nuclear convoys were first identified and described in detail (*NS* 11 July 1982 and 10 June 1983), several 'nuclear free' local authorities have protested to the Ministry of Defence, without avail. Local police forces and the Defence Ministry refuse to give local authorities any warning of the shipments, information about the risks involved, or details of emergency arrangements that might be needed in the event of an accident — although the risks are evidently sufficiently great for an RAF fire tender to travel directly behind the weapons transporters at all times.

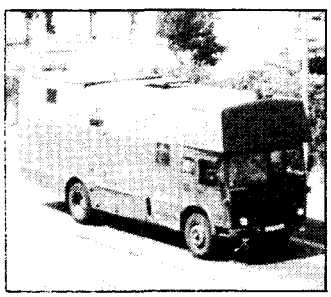
Four weeks ago, the best ever pictures of the nuclear convoy and the specially converted 10-ton AEC bomb transporters were obtained by the *Slough Observer* newspaper (see below) as four weapons carriers travelled through the town centre on the A4. Slough is also signposted as an 'anti-nuclear town'. The convoy was returning to the Burghfield factory. Since the convoy was last described in detail, a converted 'command post' vehicle which normally travelled about half a mile behind the main convoy has been replaced by a new, specially armoured and windowless bus.

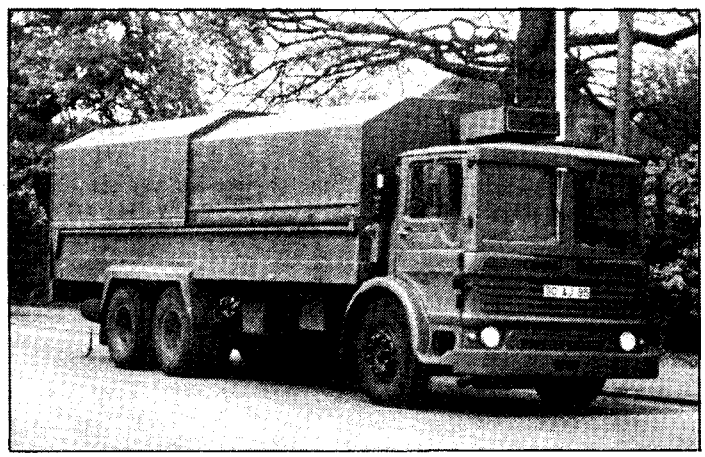
Last week's convoy took three days to travel south, stopping at an RAF depot at Longtown, Carlisle, and RAF Wittering, near Peterborough. It also visited RAF Leeming, near Catterick, which is soon to be converted to be a front-line Tornado fighter base. During Thursday afternoon, it also stopped in a motorway service area, at Woodall near Sheffield on the M1.

Dumbarton District Council, within whose bounds the Faslane Polaris base is situated, have also protested to the MoD. Peace campers at Faslane and Coulport are now accustomed to a monthly visit from the nuclear convoy, which is likely to be bringing replacement Chevaline multiple warheads for Polaris missiles. The convoy usually arrives and departs about the end of every month.

The Ministry of Defence says that they 'object strongly to anyone drawing attention to movements of this kind of material'.

Duncan Campbell





Right: nuclear weapons are carried round Britain in a fleet of six ten-ton sliding top trucks; above: in the event of an accident or attack, an armoured command bus and communications centre is always positioned half a mile behind the main convoy

Cancer 'cluster' round nuclear plant

NEW EVIDENCE linking nuclear power with leukaemia has been uncovered by a major official study in Scotland. The evidence — which has been submitted to the inquiry being conducted by Sir Douglas Black into the incidence of cancer around Sellafield (Windscale) in Cumbria — will heighten fears that living near to nuclear installations could be bad for your health.

Medical statisticians from the Scottish Office and doctors from the West of Scotland Cancer Surveillance Units have discovered abnormally high rates of leukaemia amongst young people on the Scottish west coast — where most of the radioactive effluent from Sellafield ends up — and in the immediate vicinity of the two Hunterston nuclear stations in Ayrshire.

Between 1968 and 1974 there were seven cases of myeloid leukaemia amongst those under 24 on the west coast where an average of two would be expected. In the Clyde estuary over the same period there were nine myeloid leukaemias where only three would be expected. The report in *The Lancet* last week described these as 'significant excesses' which gave the impression of an 'outbreak' between 1971 and 1975. Figures for more recent years and for other parts of the coastline however do not reveal similar patterns.

Between 1975 and 1981 the number of people under 24 who lived within ten miles of Hunterston and contracted any type of leukaemia was twice the average rate (18 cases instead of the expected nine). No similar trends were found near the nuclear stations at Chapelcross in Dumfriesshire or Dounreay in Caithness.

The report concludes that these figures do not in themselves prove a direct causal link between radioactive emissions from nuclear plants and an increased incidence of leukaemia. Nevertheless, when put alongise the recent discovery of other 'clusters' of leukaemia cases round nuclear stations, they are not comforting. Unusual concentrations of cases have been reported near the nuclear plants at Sellafield, Sizewell, Springfields and Berkeley and Oldbury.

Separate Scottish office figures also show an abnormally large increase in the incidence of all forms of cancer in the immediate vicinity of the Re-Chem International chemical disposal plant in Stirlingshire. Between 1977 and 1981 the number of cases reported in the area rose by 36 per cent (from 138 to 188), compared to a rise of just 11 per cent throughout Scotland.

Rob Edwards

Labour council sacks all lecturers

All 350 lecturers at all four colleges of further education in Gwent, South Wales, have been sacked by the Labour-controlled county council. So far over 300 people have applied for the newly advertised jobs and the education committee is due to start processing the applications next week unless the sacked lecturers climb down.

The lecturers, on the lower L1 and L2 grades, were given dismissal notices for refusing to sign new contracts stipulating that they spend an extra one or two hours a week in the classroom. The new condition was Gwent County Council's way of implementing education cuts. A similar proposal was made by W. Sussex county council last year, but dropped after approaches by the lecturers' union NATFHE. Gwent council's action has been opposed by Gwent Labour Party — of which Islwyn, Neil Kinnock's own constituency party is part — and a boycott of the jobs has been declared by all the unions concerned — NATFHE, the NUT, NAS/UWT and the Wales TUC. None of this has moved the Council leader, Lloyd Turnbull, who says there will be no problem in filling the posts from the flood of applicants, or education chairman Graham Powell, who says the prospect of employing non-union lecturers and 'scabs' won't sway him: 'It's not me who has to work with them. That's a matter for their conscience.'

Behind the scenes, the Labour Party in Gwent had been moving to make the county councillors back down. Constituency parties, including Michael Foot's in Blaenau Gwent, have passed resolutions calling on the council to withdraw the sackings. That has been in private party meetings. Publicly, party members have been unwilling to criticise the council leaders. And their silence is official: Gwent Labour Party also passed a resolution forbidding members to talk to the media about the issue.

Until last week the dispute looked like being a lengthy one. Graham Powell twice broadcast assurances that NATFHE members have until 31 August to sign their new contracts. Last week he disclaimed his assurances as a 'slip of the tongue', and set the deadline for 31 May.

His move was expected. If the council had waited until 31 August to hear if its existing lecturers were to continue, it could have started the new year with no teaching staff at all. As it is, it may have 700 expecting to work.

Sallie Ecroyd

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Shipyard contract may founder on discrimination

A NEW £45 million US order with Belfast shipbuilders Harland and Wolff may fall through because of the company's policy on recruiting Catholics. Lykes Bros Steamship Company had signed a letter of intent with the shipyard to build two container vessels; but now its president, James Amoss, has written to John Parker, the H&W chief executive, asking him to 'supply information to show that his company is now absolutely against discrimination.'

This follows the lobbying of the US Congress by the Irish National Caucus, directed by Father Sean McManus. McManus has given a file to Amoss claiming to detail sectarian practices at the shipyard. Amoss, a Catholic himself, has told a House of Representatives committee that, if upheld, the allegations would prejudice the contract. The company has replied that it adheres to the Fair Employment Code of Practice.

Seven years ago, N. Ireland's Fair Employment Agency did attempt an investigation of H&W. It took six years due to resistance by the employers, and only examined the religious beliefs of 267 of the 9,000 workforce. The company itself confirmed that if there were any Catholics employed they would be 'sleepers', i.e. people who 'would be at pains to conceal their religion.' The FEA draft report concludes the firm 'does not provide equality of opportunity in its engineering works.'

This was not acceptable to H&W's managing director, Mr R. S. Punt who accused the FEA of trying 'to bring about an improvement in opportunity for, and an increase in, the numbers employed from the Roman Catholic members of the community . . . we believe that this basis in itself is discriminatory.' The offending passage about the lack of opportunity for Catholics was removed. Instead H&W was congratulated by the FEA for its efforts to achieve equality of opportunity — which turned out to be the aim of receiving 10 per cent of its job applications from Catholics, and 25 per cent in the case of apprentices. There was no commitment to actually offering jobs to Catholics.

An additional recent embarrassment was the revelation that the General and Municipal Workers' Union allowed more than 60 Protestant non-union workers to be hired in closed shop departments rather than give the job to unemployed Catholic G&M members who had been on their own union's unemployed list for two years.

Now, the Irish National caucus are demanding that Lykes Bros obtain undertakings from H&W that they provide greater protection for Catholic workers, easy access to the yard, the recruitment of substantial numbers of Catholics and the removal of all Loyalist insignia in the yard.

The company's desire for the contract will have to be balanced against their fear of the Loyalist reaction — which is likely to be strong.

Donald Graham

MISCELLANY

Scrotal voice

A few weeks ago, on the C4 TV programme, *Voices*, the intellectuals version of *Call My Bluff*, Roger Scruton made the astonishing claim that he believed the role of intellectuals was to seek out the truth and not get involved in politics. (This was only slightly less astonishing than his reply to a question from Julia Kristeva, the French literary theorist. 'Name *one* right-wing intellectual' she demanded. 'Myself' chirped the modest fellow.) Pursuing his search for pure truth, Scruton wrote in his *Times* column of 22 May that those who wanted to bar National Front member Patrick Harrington from classes at the North London Polytechnic 'have no place in higher education. Only by removing them can the governors show their concern for academic values.' What Roger Scruton failed to say is that for the past four years he has been an enthusiastic external examiner in NLP's philosophy department, Patrick's very own.Was there not once something about the truth being the whole truth?

Special branch spoils

One group who will be lamenting the French government's decision to abolish the No Passport Excursion Card from Britain is our own Special Branch. Under cosy local arrangements with the immigration service Special Branch officers have been allowed first pick of any cards that interest them. The cards have to be surrendered when the travellers arrive in the UK, and are supposed to be burned by the Immigration Service. Special Branch officers can often be seen lurking behind immigration control desks, hoping to be mistaken for Immigration Officers (neither wears uniform). At channel ports their main interest is in British passengers — in particular those who are young or have beards or long hair. Where the Excursion Cards have scored over passports is that they include the current address of the passenger (which passports do not), and his/her photograph which can be kept for the records. The information they contain can also be gathered without the holder realising it. Special Branch will now have to be that much more overt in their 'subversive'-watching. As Special Branch members have no legal right to demand to see a passport anyone in doubt should remember that all Immigration Officers carry a warrant, and should have no objection to producing it.

Black humour

A belated welcome to GLC anti-racist year which, after a fairly rocky five months so far, decided to throw up its hands in pure celebration and lay on a concert of black performers last Monday night. Imagine their horror then when black compere Gary Wilmot began to tell 'jokes' in a mock Indian Peter Sellers accent. Worse, when the audience began to hiss and call out in displeasure, he asked irritably what race he was allowed to tell 'jokes' against. The Chinese? The Frogs? This is not quite what the good souls of the GLC had in mind.

Friends of the Star

Last week we let you know that people anxiously applying to be members of the People's Press Printing Society, the co-op which owns the *Morning Star* and is due to hold its AGMs in a week's time, found their applications returned with a dour duplicated letter starting tersely 'I am returning your application for membership of the Society'; and ending with the uninviting statement that a new application could be made on 'one of the forms in the paper'. These had been received by many people in districts deemed to be 'unfriendly', like Birmingham and Lambeth. How different then from the letter received by an applicant in a supposedly 'friendly' district, Oxford, where the Stalinist wing is dominant. This, personally typed and signed by Mary Rosser, the PPPS secretary, starts 'I am sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you but I have to ask you to re-apply for shares on the form enclosed'. This, explains the letter, is because if any old person applied 'it could lead, at some future date, to abuses which could threaten the policies of the paper'. And, in a final helpful gesture, the letter ends 'I have marked the form to ensure it can be processed before the AGM.' Is this discrimination legal? Is it honest? Is it decent?

Soliciting mail

The members of the London Library, an illustrious and studious bunch who include Lord Longford, Will Boyd and novelist Gillian Tindall, are having a lot to put with these days. First of all they were puzzled to find they could not actually get into the library until a kindly police officer told them there was something called a siege going on at something called the Libyan People's Bureau on the other side of the square. Now they are about to receive, vulgarity of vulgarities, unsolicited mail dropping through their letter boxes asking them to subscribe to this and that. For an undisclosed sum, the Library has allowed lefty media consultants Comedia to scan its membership list and provide names to Another Organisation, who will shortly be making the assorted literati offers they can't refuse.

Pigeon pie

Those of us who regard London pigeons as loathsome vermin (those beady red, greed-crazed eyes and scaly feet) are not too pleased by the complex symbolism of the latest charity stunt. To spotlight the plight of people starving in the Third World, a group of worthies is planning a 'pigeon feeding day' in Trafalgar Square to celebrate World Food Day. The UK Group for World Food Day, chaired by Oxfam Director General Designate, Frank Judd, came up with the idea of getting 'well-known people' to throw crumbs (sic) from paper bags to the overfed birds. On the bags will be the slogan 'Why are people hungry?' Rather than inciting onlookers to kill the pigeons and send them to the starving millions, this is supposed to prompt the thought that 'ordinary people are willing to feed the birds because they see they're hungry but they sometimes forget about the many millions of human beings who are hungry'. Above the noise of 10,000 beaks chomping away there will be an 'appropriate reading by a celebrity'. We suggest Tom Lehrer's 'Poisoning pigeons in the park.'

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Nuns' pray-in against Reagan

ON FRIDAY evening, as President Reagan lands at Shannon Airport, one hundred priests and nuns will start a penitential fast in Dublin to protest against his visit to Ireland.

On Saturday, when a doctorate of laws is conferred on him at University College, Galway, graduates of the National University of Ireland will burn their degrees in the city's main square. (The Convocation of the university has voted by 419 to eight that the decision to confer a degree on the President should be revoked). That same night there will be an all night vigil at Ballyporeen, the village much ridiculed by the BBC where the President claims to have ancestral roots.

On Sunday a penal mass will be held just outside the village to coincide with his arrival, nearly drawing together folk memories of the sufferings of Irish Catholics with the present plight of the peoples of Central America. That night when Mr Reagan arrives in Dublin to an official welcome by the Irish President, a human 'Ring Against Reagan' will be formed.

On Monday, when his visit reaches its climax with an address to the joint houses of the Irish parliament, there will be a march from the GPO in which deputies and senators who have chosen to boycott his speech will take part.

There are some nice ironies in all this. Reagan is coming to Ireland principally because his advisers suggested it would be a good way to appeal to the Catholic vote in the United States, not just the Irish American, but the Italian and burgeoning Hispanic vote too. It now seems inevitable that there will be quite considerable demonstrations against the visit and that prominent in all these will be Irish Catholic priests and nuns who have seen at first hand the effects of the President's policies in Central America.

It is all a far cry from the visit twenty years ago of Jack Kennedy, whose triumphal progress through the ould country was closely scrutinised by Reagan's aides when they drew up the itinerary for this weekend's visit. In 1984 the fashionable place for Irish politicians to be against the President's visit and even such seasoned troopers as Charles Haughey are going to some pains to hint that they are on the side of the suffering and oppressed.

All this could prove very embarrassing for the Irish Government. From its point of view the purpose of bringing the President to Ireland is to demonstrate to the world at large, and Mrs Thatcher in particular, that Mr Reagan entertains warm feelings for Ireland and may be prepared to back Irish demands for a new British policy on the North. That cosy picture could be shattered if Mr Reagan is greeted everywhere he goes by television cameras concentrating on demonstrations against his visit rather than the visit itself.

Mary Holland

Can't stay, can't go

THIS WEEK, a tribunal will make the final decision on whether to deport a Turkish-Cypriot family to a country whose existence the British government refuses to recognise.

Salik and Emine Kamil came to Britain for medical treatment in 1976. In common with a third of the Cypriot population, they had lost their home, property and livelihood in the wake of the 1974 invasion, having been forced to migrate to the Turkish-controlled part of the country. They were unable to find work or accommodation and, when they came to Britain, considered themselves to be refugees.

Following the birth of a daughter in February 1980, the family were immediately ordered to leave Britain. Their subsequent appeals were turned down on the grounds that they had never been legally recognised by the Home Office as refugees. In common with many other people who had fled Cyprus, the Kamils have fallen foul of a rather disingenuous Home Office argument.

Those Cypriots who fled to Britain in the immediate aftermath of the Turkish invasion were granted leave to stay as 'displaced persons'. But those who came to Britain later, like the Kamils, after trying unsuccessfully to resettle in another part of Cyprus were never recognised as 'displaced'.

In 1982, the government granted the 'displaced persons' permission to remain in Britain if they had renewed their permits regularly. Other people were to receive 'careful and sympathetic consideration' but in practice that has meant being deported. Last year, over 80 Cypriots were sent back.

But with the Turkish-occupied part of Cyprus declaring itself an independent state, the British government faces an embarrassing dilemma. Last November, it strongly condemned the secessionist move and supported a UN resolution calling upon the international community not to recognise the new 'state'. Therefore, it would be inconsistent to send the Kamils to the Turkish-occupied part of Cyprus but Turkey itself might refuse to accept them. The Kamils are the first family to pose this problem for the government and the outcome is being watched carefully by the Turkish-Cypriot community in Britain.

Kevin Watkins

A 'better class' of supporter

HEALTH MINISTER Kenneth Clarke has caved in to local Tory pressure by agreeing to keep Shipley Hospital open. Confidential minutes of Yorkshire regional health authority show that he ignored warnings by local health officials that Shipley was unsafe for geriatric care

Meanwhile, Clarke has confirmed the closure of a nearby hospital which caters specifically for the elderly Thorton View has been occupied by staff since last August.

The government was warned by local Tory MP Marcus Fox of a widespread grassroots revolt which would have endangered his seat if Shipley closed. Leafy Shipley, with its large detached houses, is a stronghold of the rich and middle classes. Thornton View, however, is the poorest constituency in Bradford — a Labour held seat — and has the highest immigrant population.

Dr Clive Tedd, a GP who serviced the 30-bed GP hospital, said: 'The Minister knew he would lose a Conservative MP at the next election. I was secretary of one of the wards of the local Conservative Association and it was made quite clear to me that was what would happen. I think Mr Clarke is happy to see Thornton View close because the mixture of people trying to keep it open is totally different. It is seen as trade unionists, Nupe members and to a lesser extent relations of elderly patients.'

Bradford health officials were hoping to close both Thornton View and Shipley in order to save over £1 million a year and rebuild St Lukes in Bradford as a major local hospital. Their argument is that they already have too many geriatric beds.

Officials have been running both hospitals down; Thornton View by no longer referring geriatric patients and Shipley by refusing to supply essential equipment. But Mr Clarke announced on 11 April that Shipley was 'a popular old hospital which can be kept up to a good standard' and its acute medical beds would be switched to care of the elderly.

Confidential minutes of Yorkshire regional health authority show that the Minister brushed aside warnings taking this decision. Bradford health officials had concluded 'that it would not even be possible to achieve the minimum standards for the care of elderly patients within the confines of Shipley Hospital and that the facilities would be worse than currently available in other geriatric hospitals within the district.'

Thornton View appears to enjoy widespread popularity including a 30,000-signature petition, support from 75 MPs and an all-party motion backing the staff passed by the Tory-led Bradford council. Yorkshire miners regularly attend the picket lines and £1,000 is being raised to produce a reggae record celebrating the hospital's stand.

Phil Cohen

Black women act on male violence

ON 24 MAY, 50 women, mainly Asian and Afro-Caribbean, marched through Southall in protest against domestic violence. The demonstration, organised by Southall Black Sisters, was in response to the death of an Asian woman, Krishna Sharma, who was found hanged on 8 March.

A week earlier, at the resumed inquest at Hammersmith Coroner's Court, the Coroner had returned a verdict of suicide, although Mrs Sharma's body was bruised and her clothes torn. A close relative said Mrs Sharma's husband had threatened to kill her if she ever called the police, and there was a history of violence from her husband.

Mrs Sharma did finally call the police on 7 March and was found dead the next day. P.C. Lloyd, who came to the house, said he could find no evidence that Mrs Sharma's husband, Chandra Mohan Sharma, hit her, although he had admitted to slapping her sometimes.

Police had advised Mrs Sharma that she would have to bring a private prosecution against her husband. 'It is a very unsatisfactory procedure that this kind of action has to be brought by the complainant', commented the Coroner, Mr Burton.

After the inquest, at a picket outside Chandra Mohan Sharma's house, one woman was knocked down by a relative of Sharma, and another threatened. The police took no action. On the 24 May demonstration and picket, there was a heavy police presence, particularly outside the Sharmas' house. One woman was arrested and taken to Southall police station. She was released without charge after the arrival of angry demonstrators who marched on the police station.

The campaign, called Black women Against Male Violence, is demanding a full public inquiry into the circumstances of Krishna Sharma's death, and an investigation into police response to domestic violence.

By directly picketing Chandra Mohan Sharma's house, the campaign harks back to militant traditions among Asian women who have taken up similar issues through public protests in India and Pakistan. The campaign aims to break the silence surrounding domestic violence, highlight it as a political issue and inform women that there are alternatives to living within violent marriages. Apart from the network of Women's Aid refuges, there are two Asian women's refuges in London with several more due to be set up.

Gita Saghal

Gita Saghal is a member of Southall Black Sisters which is based at 86 Northcote Avenue, Southall, Middx.

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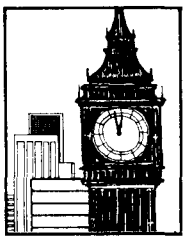

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

The shabby lives of Tory Englishmen abroad

IT IS FASHIONABLE — in fact it has been fashionable for many years — to dismiss election manifestos as boring, irrelevant documents. Boring they may be, but irrelevant they are not. They provide the nearest thing we have to a contract between a party and the electorate. Last summer, Labour suffered by offering a contract with an unusual defect: its small print — containing detailed policies — was fine, but the large print — conveying Labour's overall direction — was disbelieved.

The Conservatives were cleverer. Their manifesto made very few promises. They gambled that the charge of a 'hidden manifesto', containing all sorts of horrible consequences for unemployment, taxation, the Welfare State and so on, would not stick. Their gamble paid off.

Still, it would be a mistake to imagine that many people read manifestos from cover to cover, any more than they look at the details on the warranty that comes inside a plastic bag with a new iron or television set. And, if manifestos that touch on real power at general elections have small audiences, how much smaller are they likely to be when so much less is at stake, as in the European Parliament election to be held in a fortnight.

That, anyway, is my explanation for the sorry state of the Conservative manifesto for the Euro-election. Reading their manifesto, and then studying the record at Strasbourg of the 60 Tory Euro-MPs over the past five years, it is hard to believe that they describe the same party. The manifesto waxes lyrical about how 'after five years we have a record of solid achievement in Europe'. Conservatives, we are told, 'have insisted that member states should retain their vital interests in the Council of Ministers by being able to invoke, where necessary, the principle of unanimity'. As for the Parliament itself, it is a 'forum where the problems facing the community can be debated and solutions proposed'. It would be cruel to compare those lofty sentiments with what the Tories actually do. Here goes.

Two years ago Peter Walker, then Mrs Thatcher's Agriculture Secretary, described an EEC decision to override a British veto on food prices as 'a sad and damaging day in the Community's history'. The same month the European Parliament debated the principle of majority voting. Reading the current Tory manifesto, one might think its MEPs had fought hard to defend Walker's position. How wrong one would be. Sir Henry Plumb, the leader of the Tory group and a former President of the National Farmers' Union, spoke strongly *against* the government line, and in favour of using majority voting to give farmers more money and to ensure that the rest of us paid higher food prices.

Nor was it just a matter of one ex-farmer failing to rid himself of the bad habits of a lifetime. Inside the European Parliament a debate took place that month on majority voting. An amendment was proposed, calling for the abolition of the veto. It was moved by another Tory Euro-MP, William Newton Dunn, and passed by 98 votes to 31. The Tories were by no means unanimous: on this, as on some other issues, they were divided. But any notion that they have battled to protect the veto (or British consumers) is so much eyewash.

As Paul Howell, one of the Tory MEPs who found himself in a minority on that occasion, put it, Plumb was 'wildly out of touch with political opinion in the United Kingdom. Many of us are utterly devastated by the irresponsible attitude taken by the European Democratic Group and expounded by our leader, who must now be seriously undermining the position of the Farm Minister, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister'. (The European Democratic Group consists almost wholly of Britain's Tories.)

SO MUCH FOR the manifesto's claim that Conservatives in Europe insist on the veto. Its statement that Strasbourg is used as a forum for discussing solutions to Europe's problems also sits oddly with the facts.

Few problems in Europe are as intractable as Northern Ireland — and, as both the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic are members of the EEC, there are few better forums for representing all viewpoints than the European Parliament. In March this year the Parliament adopted a resolution on Ulster by 124 votes to 103. Sixty-three MEPs abstained; most of them were Conservatives, under instructions from Downing Street to insist that Northern Ireland was none of Strasbourg's business.

The basis of the Parliament's decision was a report from its Political Affairs Committee. For once Europe's right-wing Liberals joined forces with the Socialist Group. The resolution they put to MEPs was carefully drafted to avoid offending the British government. It opposed all forms of terrorism, acknowledged that the EEC had 'no competence to make proposals for changes in the Constitution of Northern Ireland', and made a number of practical proposals for assistance on economic and social issues. If anything the six-page resolution was too anodyne: its significance lay not in any profound or shocking contribution it made to the future of Ulster, but the fact that it sought to stake out *some* common ground on which Catholic and Protestant, British and Irish, could meet.

Had the Tory MEPs chosen to support the resolution, it would have been symbolically, and perhaps politically, important. But they refused. Had they offered some cogent arguments for opposing the resolution, or pointed out some defect, their attitude could be defended. However, they offered no such reasoned opposition. Speaking for the Tory group, Sir Fred Catherwood effectively admitted that he was acting under orders, and did not even try to criticise the report that underpinned the resolution:

> I find myself in almost total agreement with the report. I think it goes to the heart of the matter. If I were a free agent, I would vote for this report. However, I and my colleagues cannot get over the fact that we are here as members of the British governing party . . . The view that has been put to us, and which I accept, is that it would not be helpful for us to vote for this report.

Ah yes, 'it would not be helpful': the formula used by political zombies down the ages to justify loyalty above reason. One Tory MEP, Lord Bethell, refused to play Catherwood's shabby game:

> Acts of violence have taken place not only in Britain and Ireland but also in other member states, and, therefore, the problem of Northern Ireland has an effect on European Security, and is a legitimate matter of concern to honourable members. I have noted the constructive approach of this report to Community aid to this poor part of the European Community . . . I believe that this report will be educational, particularly on the continent. Therefore, in hope of reconciliation between the two traditions of Britain and Ireland in the north of that country, I shall vote in favour of the report.

Perhaps the Conservatives are applying some principle about the non-interference of the EEC in the internal affairs of member states. If so, they apply it somewhat inconsistently. Two days before the Northern Ireland debate they supported a resolution opposing nationalisation in France, and calling for the European Commission to investigate some of President Mitterrand's policies.

For those naive souls who believe that such an investigation would trample on France's sovereignty, Tory MEP Michael Welsh had a ready explanation. 'We are all part of the same country', he said, 'when such measures impinge on the Treaty of Rome and the rules of competition. A mixed economy is implicit in the Treaty of Rome, and if at any time nationalisation measures in any member state reached a point when they interfered with the interplay of market forces then, of course, a difficult situation would arise.'

I could go on to document the Strasbourg Tories' appalling record on human rights issues, and how this contradicts the manifesto. Except I can't. Wisely, the manifesto says nothing on the subject. □

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Labour's lost year

Following last year's electoral disaster, Neil Kinnock committed himself to a complete overhaul of Labour's vote-winning machine, especially the party's HQ. Christian Wolmar finds out what's happened to the promises of reform

THE TIMES carried a report last week that the Labour Party's 'Euro-campaign unit' had been wound up — just as the election contest was getting under way. 'The running of the campaign machine', it said, 'would be taken over by (general secretary) Mr James Mortimer and Mr David Hughes, the national agent.' What *The Times* did not add, presumably because it did not know, was that Mortimer promptly went off to Spain for a week's holiday.

A further insight into the bizarre workings of the party's HQ at Walworth Road is that both events were planned in advance. Mortimer's trip had long been booked. The exact timing of the Euro-unit's demise was due to the fact that it could only qualify for subsidy from the European Parliament up to the moment when the Euro-campaign proper began. Thereafter it would have to be paid for out of the party's funds. Since the unit had failed to establish its role as the spearhead of Labour's election effort, the campaign has been put back into the hands of a campaign committee — consisting of an indeterminate number of changing politicians and party workers, who meet daily.

This is the very same structure that was so heavily criticised after the 1983 general election debacle. As one member of the Walworth Road staff put it: 'The Euro-campaign is now like the general election in slow motion. The bureaucratic machine has re-asserted its power'.

The one thing that was clear about Walworth Road to everyone after Labour's June 1983 election trouncing was that the Party HQ was in desperate need of a shake-up. It was clear, too, that Jim Mortimer had not been an effective general secretary. As part of the post-election inquest, Neil Kinnock gave a speech in Stoke-on-Trent in September, which was an unequivocal commitment to a complete overhaul of the party machinery. It was an unprecedented move from a man who knew that his leadership election was all over bar the voting. The apparent strength of Kinnock's commitment and the detail of his ten point plan to reshape the whole organisation amazed party activists and raised considerable expectations.

A sizeable chunk of Kinnock's speech was devoted to Walworth Road itself. In particular, he said:

- Party staffing must be improved in quality, training and allocation
- There must be clear lines of responsibility for the management of elections
- The National Executive Committee [which is responsible for Walworth Road] must give a higher priority to its organisational and administrative role
- The efficiency of head office must be improved.

Much of his speech leant heavily on the work of the six studies of the organisation of the Labour Party since 1967. For example, stressing that the point had been made in both the 1972 and 1982 reports, he underlined 'the need for clear job descriptions and for a rationalisation of the balance of work (at HQ). There is a need for clear lines of authority and responsibility, for a better match of resources and activities and for a stronger element of forward planning.' (There is actually *no* forward planning as such at Walworth Road.)

Both photos: Camera Press

Walworth Road, London SE17: little or nothing has changed at party HQ. Inset: Jim Mortimer still in charge.

THE BRIGHTON conference which elected Kinnock leader, carried two motions dealing with campaigning strategy and party organisation, again quite specifically calling for overall reform of the structure of Walworth Road. With such grass roots support, party activists assumed that Kinnock's commitment to change could be translated in to swift action.

It was not. In particular Walworth Road, which presided over the 1983 debacle, has been left unscathed, as if it had won a famous victory. A few staff have left, several in frustration. But, as well as Mortimer, not a single head of department has been moved; and no significant alteration has been made to its operation or basic structure.

Within weeks of taking up office as leader, Kinnock had abandoned any hope of a quick revamp of Walworth Road. He knew that he needed two things to succeed: a blueprint and a person to carry it out. There was no shortage of existing blueprints from previous studies. But, he needed either the existing general secretary Mortimer to take on the mantle of hatchet man, or to appoint a new one able to do the job.

In the event, Mortimer moved first and blundered badly. In November, he announced a drastic programme of cuts, involving a reduction of 60 (out of 130) staff, which essentially would have destroyed the concept of having a headquarters for the party and which necessitated compulsory redundancies. The scheme included no strategy for restructuring or rationalising departments.

It was a purely financial plan and was quickly abandoned, following strong reaction both from the Walworth Road staff and the NEC. Mortimer's staff reduction target was reduced to 20 voluntary redundancies, a figure which itself was only withdrawn two weeks ago, following the NEC's reaffirmation of its 'no redundancy' policy.

The plan's only effect was further sapping of staff morale and strengthening the resistance to change. Meanwhile, Kinnock searched in vain for a new general secretary, amidst persistent speculation that Mortimer would go. At least one candidate said that he would not take the job unless there had been both an overhaul of the structure and a clear-out in advance of those who had consistently blocked change at Walworth Road. At various times candidates spoken of for Mortimer's job have included Derek Gladwyn and Larry Whitty of GMBATU, ex-MP John Garrett, assistant national agent Joyce Gould and TUC deputy general secretary Norman Willis.

According to sources close to him, Kinnock

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was also reluctant to tackle the issue because he feared it would burst his honeymoon bubble as leader. Although it is not a left-right issue, virtually every NEC member has some vested interest in the status quo. The fear of wrecking the party's fragile new unity and the mess over the redundancies plan made Kinnock seek refuge last January in the traditional Labour party remedy — he called for another report.

KINNOCK TURNED to his new Campaign Strategy Committee, which groups members of the shadow cabinet, the affiliated trade unions and the NEC, to commission the report. Called, without a trace of irony, the 'review of reviews', it simply consolidates the previous findings of the other studies — all of which share the common characteristic of not having been implemented.

The key problems at Walworth Road, identified by these studies, are:

- The absence of any overall definition of the role of the HQ
- The lack of liaison between departments and the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure
- Lack of forward planning and budgeting
- The NEC's failure to take any interest in the administration or organisation of the party
- The lack of clear lines of communication between the staff and NEC members, MPs and constituency parties
- The absence of any effort to seek new sources of funding.

What is not mentioned, however, in the 'review of reviews' is the key role played by the 'heads of department' at Walworth Road. The ten heads of department meet weekly. These meetings are the locus of power in the organisation. The strict hierarchy within the individual departments, with little notion of industrial democracy despite the high level of politicisation of the staff, is a source of constant complaint.

While no attempt at structural change has been made, a number of posts at Walworth Road have now been created or cut. The long-awaited fundraiser, first mooted as long as five years ago, has now been appointed (Steve Billcliffe, who fought Suffolk South in 1983), as has a campaigns officer (Joyce Gould, one of the two assistant national agents) and the posts of a separate women's officer and a business manager have been advertised. Meanwhile, there have been cuts in the number of researchers and in library staff, and the post of property officer (who dealt with constituencies' property holdings) has been abolished.

Most of these changes may be sensible, but they do not constitute a new strategy and they tie the hands of any new general secretary. They certainly do not challenge the oligarchy of the heads of department.

The power of this oligarchy to resist change is illustrated by the fate of the plan to merge the international and research departments, the two main sources of policy-making. Following lengthy discussions, the staff agreed that it was a logical step, given the common interest over such issues as the EEC, multinationals and oil. The only opponent was the international department head, Jenny Little, who told the *New Statesman* that 'it would have been disastrous, because our international relations work would have been downgraded in favour of domestic issues'.

The new department was to have been led by Geoff Bish, generally recognised to be competent in his current post as research department head. But Alex Kitson, chair of the NEC International Committee and a close personal friend of Little's, combined with Mortimer to oppose and defeat the plan at the NEC.

The activists for change wanted to turn Labour into a campaigning party. Apart from fighting elections, that simply hasn't ever been considered as part of Walworth Road's remit. The half-hearted nature of any commitment to campaigning is shown by the appointment of Joyce Gould, already very busy as assistant national agent, to the post of campaigns officer and the dropping of a plan to appoint five campaigns officers.

The first campaign, after the new policy was adopted, was on the NHS and went quite well. Backed by enthusiastic local parties and good press work, it received a lot of favourable coverage. But even at its height, only three staff were involved. Most of the time it was in the hands of one person. (When the drivers of the 'campaign ambulance' came back to Walworth Road after driving round the country, far from being greeted by a welcoming committee, they had to sit around for four hours before a department head could be coaxed out of a meeting to sign the cheque for their wages.)

As Walter Brown, the assistant national agent, told the *New Statesman*: 'The problem with the campaign units has been that they've become isolated and haven't fitted into the existing structure. So, we're not planning to appoint campaigns officers, but instead we'll deal with each campaign as it comes along'.

The Euro-campaign unit's history was exactly on this pattern. It failed in simple tasks, like co-ordinating shadow ministers to speak on the same subject simultaneously or to plan properly the content of press conferences because it wasn't given the authority to cut across the rigid hierarchical structure of Walworth Road.

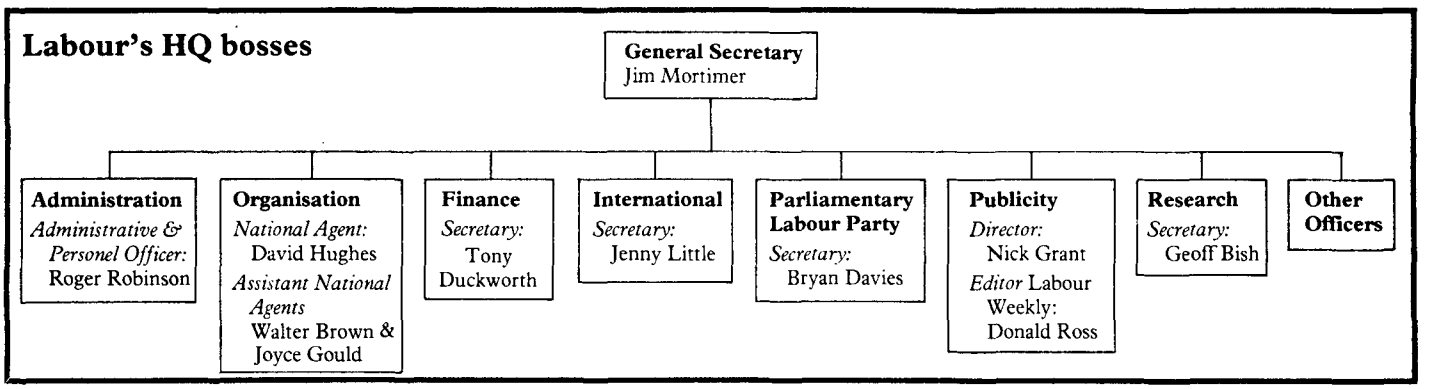
There were, too, the usual howlers. In keeping with tradition from the previous Euro-elections, the 1984 manifesto had to be pulped and reprinted at the last moment. In 1979, it was because the title was printed as *Labour in Europe* instead of *Labour and Europe*. This time, apart from leaving off the European socialist group imprimatur necessary to get its funding, it said 'fighting for a *square* deal in Europe' instead of '*new* deal'. The reprint of the manifesto meant that it only reached the press launch 20 minutes before the start.

LACK OF MONEY is the pat answer against suggestions of reform. Indeed, the cost of moving the party's HQ from Transport House four years ago and pressure from the Co-op Bank to repay the £200,000 overdraft have put constraints on new initiatives. But, on current account, the party is actually in the black and the chief complaint of reformers like John Garrett is that new ways of raising money have not been properly examined: 'They are not even looking at a method of setting up a national membership register, which could be done straightaway on a voluntary basis without a rule change. Such a list could be the basis of a successful direct mail business.'

The NEC's reluctance to condone redundancies may be principled, but it is also backed by a powerful financial argument. The only recent redundancy of a senior member of staff was the previous finance department chief whose penchant for bookbinding led him to forget how to renew the party's insurance for two years. He got a staggeringly generous £40,000 as he left (money from the Trade Unions for Labour Victory) and that precedent has pushed up prohibitively the cost of any general purge of senior staff.

The 'review of reviews' is finished and will be discussed by the first meeting of the Campaign Strategy Committee after the Euro-elections. But it is the NEC which has responsibility for Walworth Road and only if Kinnock throws his weight personally behind a programme of reform will it have a chance of being carried out.

Meanwhile, back at the Euro-campaign, the holiday habit is catching. Gwyneth Dunwoody, who heads the NEC's press and publicity committee, is spending two weeks in Hong Kong. She'll be back in time to give a talk to East Dulwich Fabians on the eve of polling day, with the title 'Getting Labour's message across'. □



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Teachers strike back

Barry Hugill accounts for the new-found unity in the staffroom

TEN YEARS AGO, Margaret Thatcher, then Secretary of State for Education, made a deal with her friend and ally at the DHSS, Sir Keith Joseph. She would support him in his battle in Cabinet to get a pay review for the nurses if he would do the same for her with the teachers.

The outcome is well known. The deal was struck and both nurses and teachers won large pay increases. In some instances the award reached as high as 35 per cent for senior teachers and the most junior got at least 29 per cent. Ten years later teachers' union leaders claim that a salary increase of 31 per cent would be necessary to restore the pay of their members to 1974 levels. (The starting teachers' salary out of London is now £5,178. Average pay if headteachers are excluded is £8,200 and, if included, £9,200. London Weighting brings this up to £10,000.) Even the hard line Tories of the Association of County Councils, steadfastly refusing to end the current dispute by a reference to arbitration, concede that an 18 per cent award would be needed to restore pay to 1978 levels.

The stubbornness of Sir Keith and his supporters on the Burnham negotiating panel has ensured a rare degree of unanimity between the teachers' unions. For the first time ever, the two giants, National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT), have issued a joint statement for staffroom distribution outlining the industrial action to be taken — no supervision of school dinners; no cover for absent colleagues; strikes in selected areas and schools. Most importantly, the statement says 'full support must be given by members of each union for their colleagues taking action. All members are advised that there is nothing to be gained by members of one union seeking to persuade members of the other to join their action. Such efforts would hinder maximum co-ordination and could lead to unnecessary divisions.'

And so they do but that has never stopped them in the past from indulging in damaging inter-union skirmishes. Indeed it is during disputes that the teaching unions are most beastly about each other. The third largest union, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA) always expects to pick up new recruits from the NUT every time the word strike is uttered. AMMA is reluctant to strike and provides a happy resting ground for those who share the ethos of 'we must do nothing to damage the children'. True the 20,000-strong Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) is pledged never to strike but its brand of muscular Christianity and free market Toryism makes it an unattractive proposition for all but the most dedicated non-strikers.

It is indicative of the hard line taken by the employers that even AMMA is talking about strike action and has balloted members on what form of industrial action they would consider most appropriate. Another factor in the Association's new-found militancy is the growing influence of the newly appointed deputy general-secretary, Peter Smith, a one-time Oxford Labour Club activist and a man thought to be impatient with the 'fuddy-duddy' image of the Association.

BUT IT IS the NUT and the NAS/UWT that count with a joint membership of 349,000 out of a teaching force of about 414,000. With 223,000 the NUT is easily the largest but over half of its members are in primary schools leaving the NAS/UWT, with 120,000, claiming to be the dominant secondary school union. (There is also an important sexual divide: it is the women in the NUT who most strongly share the nurses' ethos of non-striking, as well as their tolerance of women's low pay.)

Both unions have had a change of leadership this year and this is undoubtedly an important factor in their new-found unity. For years the NAS/UWT was led by Terry Casey, a charismatic 'redneck' who constantly earned headlines with his support for the cane, stronger school discipline and other populist causes. Aggressively 'non-political', the union tends to represent non-graduate teachers, often in the north and Midlands. It is more homogeneous than the NUT, containing neither primary school nor head teachers. As such it is more of a craft union than an 'industrial' union, giving it a focus that is more narrow but more militant.

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David Fowler

McAvoy (top) and Smithies: building up a new relationship

Under Casey, a constant guerrilla campaign was waged against the NUT which was accused of 'selling out' the classroom teacher in return for respectability and a seat round the table at the DES when 'educational' issues were on the agenda. Never known for its contribution to educational debate, the NAS/UWT retains a touching faith in the centrality of the three 'Rs'.

Casey retired last year and was replaced by his deputy, Fred Smithies, a quieter character who has neither the charisma, nor sectarian instincts, of his former boss. He has struck up a good working relationship with Doug McAvoy, the NUT deputy general secretary who has been in charge since Fred Jarvis, the general secretary of many years' standing, had a road accident last Christmas. With Jarvis and Casey at the helm it was hard to imagine any meaningful co-operation between the two unions but their departure (albeit temporary in Jarvis's case) has cleared the way for conciliation of a short.

The NUT, despite membership losses in the last few years caused by spending cuts, is in better shape than for a long time. Throughout the 70s it was scarred by internal battles between the SWP-dominated Rank and File group and an Executive described by Rank and File as 'right-wing, bureaucratic and headteacher-dominated'. The Executive responded in kind under the leadership of the Communist president, Max Morris, with draconian rule changes which purged the Rank and File leaders from office. Morris, now retired, has joined the Labour Party and is waging the good fight against Tariq Ali in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency party (in *Who's Who*, Morris names his recreation as 'ridiculing Trotskyists and trendies'). The CP, once a powerful force, is now in tatters, almost totally immersed in its own internal troubles.

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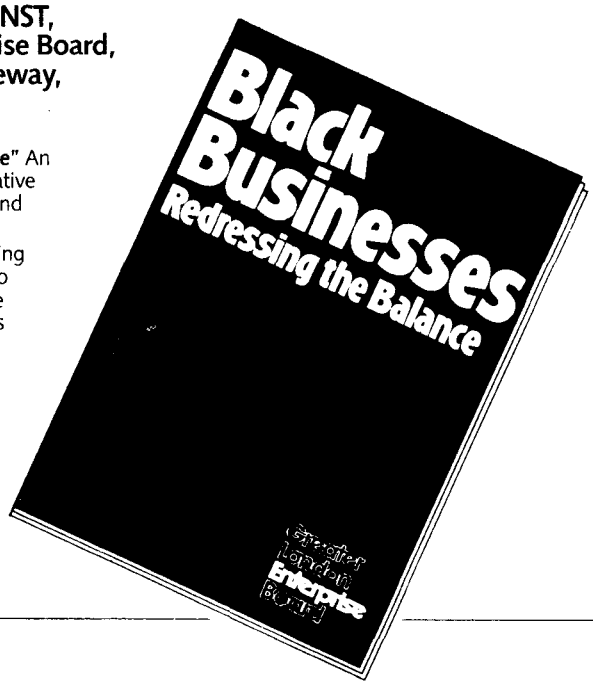

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Rank and File was disbanded in the late 70s after the theoretical gurus of the SWP decided that 'rank-and-fileism' was a phenomenon of the past. The non-communist Left re-grouped in the Socialist Teachers' Association which, although Trotskyist-influenced, takes a less sectarian line and has won support from both Labour Party and non-committed teachers.

YET IN THE final analysis this new-found unity of the unions can best be explained by reference to Sir Keith Joseph himself. For years, teachers, like nurses, have accepted their falling pay levels because of their 'obligation to the community'. In return they have expected, and have received, fulsome praise from Ministers of State. Year in year out, Education Ministers spoke of the dedication, commitment and selflessness of the classroom teacher. But no longer. Sir Keith has made it clear that he considers many teachers underqualified and inadequate. To add insult to injury, he recently explained that as there was a constant influx of graduates wishing to teach, market forces would ensure that wage levels remained low. Teachers who had got used to believing that they were valued 'professionals' are now told that they are mere workers in the interplay of supply and demand.

The other aspect of 'professionalism' was teacher autonomy over the curriculum. But the growth of the MSC and the increasingly strident pronouncements of Sir Keith over what should and should not be taught has destroyed the illusion that the unions, in particular the NUT, have any control over education policy.

It is too early to say what the outcome of the current dispute will be. If, as is widely believed, Mrs Thatcher pays the nurses in the region of 6 or 7 per cent, the pressure will be on Sir Keith Joseph to remind her of their old pact — that what goes for the nurses should apply to the teachers as well. The unions would probably settle for the 4.5 per cent offer tied to a promise of a salary and structure review later in the year yielding significant cash increases in return for an acceptance by teachers that tasks now classified by them as 'extra-curricular' should constitute part of their contracts of employment. Whatever the outcome the teachers unions seem set to come out of the dispute stronger and more united than they have been for a decade. □

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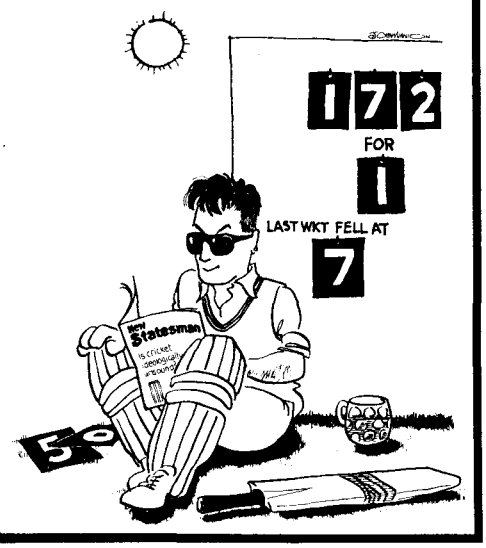

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IRELAND

Prior's ante

Mary Holland examines Jim Prior's motives in announcing his possible departure

THE LIBERAL AIR is rent with lamentations over the unhappy state of James Prior. Some attribute it to a noxious quality in the Irish air, which has defeated 'a whole procession of first-class servants — politicians, officials, soldiers' (*Sunday Times*). Others blame Mr Prior's condition on Mrs Thatcher and the fact that his style of Conservatism is out of favour.

All seem to believe that the Northern Irish Secretary's remarks on Radio Norfolk, when he appealed for the poisoned chalice of Ulster's suffering to be taken from him, were 'indiscreet', perhaps because he himself later described them in this way. The bluff Norfolk squire ruminates in an unguarded moment on the ills of far-off Ireland. It's an affecting picture, but not a wholly convincing one.

Ever since he arrived in Ireland, Mr Prior has used the media with enviable skill to float political kites and to test reaction to controversial ideas. There have been times when this has infuriated those who have to deal with him. During the period when he was setting up his new Assembly in Belfast, a senior Irish civil servant said to me acidly 'Of course, *we* never know what is in Prior's mind until we read it in the *Financial Times*'. There have been lapses, for example a briefing to American correspondents some weeks ago when the word got out that Mr Prior had not ruled out the idea of joint Anglo-Irish sovereignty in the North. But even this worked out all right in the end, concentrating the minds of local politicians on ideas which the Secretary of State wanted to put on the agenda for public discussion.

The suggestion that Mr Prior was letting his hair down to his own constituents and that his remarks were for local consumption doesn't carry much weight either. On at least one occasion in the recent past he has commented locally to his own constituents, when he particularly wanted to focus national attention on the dangerous complexities of Ulster politics. At the time of the hanging debate last year he used an open letter to his constituency party to set out his views on the disastrous effects that restoration of the death penalty for terrorist crimes would have in Northern Ireland. The letter was crucial in swinging uncommitted Tory votes against hanging.

So what was Mr Prior up to, letting it all hang out on Radio Norfolk? His remarks will not have come as a surprise to anyone who knows him, since he has been saying this kind of thing, and more, in private for several months. By September he will have been in Northern Ireland for three years. The job is a taxing one emotionally as well as physically. It is to Mr

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Prior's credit that he is still affected by the tragedy of the violence. He is due a change, but has also made it clear that he would be prepared to stay around if his presence was considered necessary to any new initiative. He points out, quite rightly, that any new Secretary of State enjoys a brief honeymoon when he first arrives in Belfast and thus a new person might be better placed to win local support for any fresh proposals. He himself had the benefit of just such a period when he first arrived in Northern Ireland during the last awful throes of the hunger strike, when the two communities were more bitterly polarised than at any time during the present troubles.

Any comparison of the province then and now is enough to bear witness to Mr Prior's commitment and political skills. If he is finally defeated in his mission to pacify Ireland, it may not be the Irish to blame this time, but a lack of political will in Britain to solve Ulster's problems. For the first time in over a decade there is a small hope for progress, accompanied by great fear as to what will happen if this opportunity is missed.

Mr Prior's advisers tell him that the Protestant community is more stable and relaxed than it has been for a long time and point to concrete evidence of this. The protests which it had been feared might erupt in the wake of last month's New Ireland Forum's report did not materialise. There are signs of movement in the Official Unionist Party, shown in the public statements of its leaders and its new policy statement, *The Way Forward*. True, the slight thaw in attitudes towards the SDLP shown in this document owes much to Protestant fears of Sinn Fein, but is nonetheless important for that.

IN THE REPUBLIC, the New Ireland Forum has caused bitter political rows within Fianna Fail, but much of this has to do with consolidating Charles Haughey's leadership and with the party's desire to beat the 'green' drum in the EEC elections. The Forum Report itself shows a significant moderation in the Irish electorate's traditional attitudes to unity and this is confirmed by the findings of recent opinion polls. Garret FitzGerald's government is committed to compromise and to any co-operation with Britain which will bring peace closer in the North. It is also even more punitive in its attitudes to the IRA than the Conservative government itself.

But, quite apart from his own career prospects, Mr Prior knows that he must work to a very tight deadline indeed if any of this is to make a difference. The situation is dangerous in Northern Ireland and could quickly become more so. There is a new spate of IRA violence and more may come before the EEC elections in two weeks time. The onward political march of Provisional Sinn Fein is likely to be consolidated at that election and this will have its effects on the Protestant community, making it more difficult for Unionists to go along with any political change.

For all these reasons, Mr Prior shares the view of the Dublin government that there is a need for urgent action. Dublin would like to see intensive discussions taking place over the summer between British and Irish officials in the hope that some agreement could be reached on principles before Mrs Thatcher meets FitzGerald for a 'summit' meeting in the autumn. In these meetings the whole area of joint authority would be explored, starting with proposals for joint security and looking at ways in which the concept of joint administration could apply to the legal system, industry, agriculture, energy, transport and so on.'

To give this process any credibility, Prior needs to be able to demonstrate that he has Mrs Thatcher's support. For a start he would like her to make some positive response, however cautious, to the New Ireland Forum Report. If his interview on Radio Norfolk had a political objective it was to try to communicate his own sense of urgency about Northern Ireland to his cabinet colleagues and to win the public endorsement he desperately needs from the Prime Minister herself.

It is now beginning to look as though his bid has failed. We know that Mrs Thatcher's first response to the Forum report was one of anger at its sharp criticisms of past British policy failures, despite the best efforts of the Irish government to soothe her on this score. It was always on the cards that she would be reluctant to consider new moves on Ireland, if she was faced with any serious political problems at home, for example the miners' strike. The received wisdom is that there are no votes in Ireland and that any radical initiative would just cause problems within the Conservative Party.

From the buzz around Westminster this past week it seems that Mrs Thatcher has decided that the dubious attractions of solving the Irish problem are far outweighed by the political risks involved. The irony of this is that, due in no small part to Mr Prior's three years as Secretary of State, the possibility of making some progress on Ulster's tragedy looks much more hopeful than at any time in the past decade. If Mrs Thatcher fails to take the opportunity he has offered her, it will be sad for Mr Prior. It could be another tragedy for Ireland.

COAL INDUSTRY

Steaming ahead

As Colombia is set to join the big league of coal producers, Britain's output continues to decline. Philip Wright and Ian Rutledge explain

FAR FROM being a defunct Victorian industry since the oil crises of the 1970s, there has been a major expansion of the world coal industry. Between 1970 and 1982 total world coal production increased by a third — and fundamentally changed in its pattern of trade and ownership.

During this time the US remained the world's largest steam coal producer, with China moving into second place ahead of the Soviet Union. However, the most dramatic increases in production came from South Africa and Australia. In contrast, out of the top eight producers, Britain was the only one to cut production, although Japan, West Germany, Belgium and France predict falling output.

Alongside the increase in production has been a big rise in the export of coal. Once too bulky and cheap to go anywhere but the home fires, now the coal trade is fast expanding. Since 1977 world trade in coal has increased by 37 per cent to reach a total of 279 million tons by 1982. But within the total the fastest increase has occurred in the seaborne steam coal trade which more than doubled in the same five years. There have only really been three participants in this increase: the US, Australia and, most dramatically of all, South Africa. Their export markets are Western Europe and Japan.

Leading Steam Coal Producers *(millions of tonnes)*

	1982	1970	% change
USA	701	550	+27
China	620	360	+72
USSR	555	474	+17
Poland	189	140	+35
S. Africa	139	55	+153
India	134	74	+81
UK	121	145	-17
Australia	102	50	+104

Source: Eurostat

Now, when higher oil prices and difficulties over nuclear power are no longer spurs for new growth, the world recession has finally caught up. A slackening growth rate in 1982 turned into an actual drop in 1983, yet forecasters are still relatively optimistic. Although earlier euphoria has been dampened, the dynamic seaborne steam coal market is expected to expand from the present 90 million tons to more than 250 million tons by the year 2000.

Into this scenario fit the ambitions of the most powerful group of multinationals, the oil majors, who have spent the 70s restructuring themselves into energy producers. Planning far ahead, their moves into coal started in the United States in the early 60s when Exxon, Gulf Oil and Continental Oil all acquired US coal interests. Today, of the top 20 owners of US coal reserves, eleven are oil companies and these control 40 per cent of US coal reserves.

These moves into coal have not been confined to US companies. BP, Britain's largest company, took a stake in the US coal industry via its interest in Standard Oil of Ohio and now claims to be the eighth largest private coal producer in the world with estimated saleable reserves of 1.2 billion tons.

The most dramatic venture has been undertaken by Exxon, the world's largest corporation. Together with the Colombian government it is working to establish the largest coal mine in the world at El Cerrejon.

Following a partnership contract signed in 1980 between the Exxon subsidiary Intercor

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and the Colombian state mining company Carbocol, Colombia's modest coal industry, presently ranking 15th in the world and producing 5 million tons a year, is set for the Big League. Exxon is about to transform Colombia from its traditional role of coffee exporter into a major supplier of the West's coal needs.

Estimates of Colombia's coal reserves are being revised upwards almost daily and are presently reckoned to be over 17 billion tons, but much of this is situated in the interior of this large mountainous country. However, there are 2.25 billion tons of reserves which can be cheaply mined at El Cerrejon within 90 miles of the Caribbean coast and with only the wind-swept Guajira desert in the way. If Exxon's plans succeed, by 1989 two huge open-cast pits in the northern sector of the Cerrejon deposit will be exporting 15 million tons a year of very high quality steam coal. By the end of the century output from El Cerrejon is planned to expand to 30 million tons a year, possibly contributing as much as 10 per cent of total world trade in steam coal. Exxon's marketing experts have targeted Western Europe as the principal market.

THE DEAL signed between Exxon and the Colombian Government, which attracted strong opposition from the Colombian Left, requires Colombia to provide half of the required investment funds of $3.2 billion. In return, Colombia gets the income from the sale of half the coal, plus a royalty of 15 per cent on the income arising from Exxon's share. (Apparently a rival bid for El Cerrejon by BP only offered a 5 per cent royalty and was rejected at an early stage.) In addition to the mine itself, the project involves a massive investment in infrastructure — a new deep-water port at Bahia de Portete, a 90-mile railway from the coast to the mine, two airports, a township and even a satellite communication system!

Exxon supporters claim that it is this infrastructure which will bring lasting benefits to the remote Guajira region. However, many on the Colombian Left think that the project will merely create another traditional Latin American enclave economy. Moreover, financing Colombia's $1.6 billion share of the investment is already proving tricky and a substantial increase in foreign debt is forecast.

Then there is the problem of prices. El Cerrejon was conceived in the 70s, when it was expected that such projects would be extremely profitable because of a continuing energy crisis. Although Exxon is still banking on future demand, the world recession has severely affected price prospects. As late as 1981 Carbocol, Exxon's Colombian partner, was still forecasting a price of $89 per ton at port of embarkation (i.e. before shipment costs, insurance etc.) for 1986. But by early this year this had been revised down to $59. Current spot market prices for coal actually delivered to north west Europe are around $45. All the signs are that, at these kind of prices, El Cerrejon will be hard pressed to cover its costs.

THE DIFFICULTIES being faced by Exxon at El Cerrejon raised the vexed question of costs and prices on the world market — a subject which has been the focus of many conflicting claims during the British miners' strike, not least because prices have been used interchangeably (and erroneously) with costs. This is clearly a minefield, so to speak, because coal comes in many varieties (not just coking coal and steam coal, but specific varieties with different sulphur and ash contents and different calorific values); has to travel different distances to market (transport costs therefore play a vital part in considerations of competitiveness) and is subject to the effects of exchange rate fluctuations and the impact of manifold mechanisms of government intervention.

However, Shell Coal International recently made available estimates of the cost competitiveness of new steam coal projects in different parts of the world. For South Africa and Canada these projects are open-cast (this alone gives a large cost advantage over deep-mined coal), for the rest mixed open-cast and deep-mined, and the different coals have been adjusted to a common calorific value (12,000 BTUs per lb, low sulphur) to achieve comparability.

Taking mining costs alone the estimates show that Western Europe as a whole, and to a lesser extent Britain, have higher costs than elsewhere. But, once freight costs to Europe are taken into account, only South Africa has a clear edge over Britain. Once transhipment costs of around $9 per ton from the major landing ports of Europe (Rotterdam, Antwerp) are added British coal looks increasingly competitive.

Cheap as South African coal is, on any estimate it has one major drawback: its high ash content makes it unsuitable for the main British market, electricity generation.

Turning now to the actual selling prices rather than costs we see that only South Africa can hope to make a profit out of its coal trade operations. In turn this also indicates that the other producers are probably 'dumping' on the European market and financing this either by government subsidy or from more profitable (eg domestic) operations. Moreover, in the medium-term, industry experts predict that the current very depressed price level will only rise from $45 to between $55 and $60 per ton, casting a shadow over the optimistic forecasts for the steam coal trade.

WHAT DOES all this mean for the British coal industry? First, a very recent study backed by the Policy Studies Institute* (the same outfit which wants to tarmac over the railways) strongly advocates that for 'reasons of a security and anti-monopolistic nature' British coal should be steadily replaced by foreign coal with imports eventually reaching 30 million tons a year (currently 4 million tons). To this end we should start building extensive new facilities for handling imports and new coal-fired power stations on the coast. This is clearly seen as an attractive alternative to the now faltering plans for expanding the nuclear programme.

Quite apart from considerations of our balance of payments and the economic consequences of pit closures on British communities and industries, this emerges as a

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very dubious proposition. On the one hand, British coal is roughly cost competitive with its principal rivals, Australia and the US. On the other hand, these countries seem to be dumping, and a large increase in British imports would play into their hands, allowing them to push up their prices to cover costs.

Arthur Scargill's assertion that Britain produces the cheapest deep-mined coal in the world outside South Africa may be true; but the real point is that no country or company can really be expected to supply the British market with the right kind of coal on a *long-term basis*, whether from deep or open-cast mines, more cheaply than the British coal industry — unless they are dumping. The subsidies demanded by dumping cannot be expected to last forever.

Nor, however, can the NUM's power-base, confined to miners in the British coal industry, survive into an indefinite future as a challenge to a unified employer. In a future where oil companies are 'energy' corporations, the oil companies currently operating in the North Sea will show a lively interest in acquiring some plum privatised super-pits in Britain — once the taxpayer has taken the big risks and assumed the burden of the initial investments. □

**Coal's Contribution to UK Self-Sufficiency* by Louis Turner, Heinemann.

Thatcher's 2nd XI — No 3: Kenneth Clarke

'IF ONLY Ken could get rid of that forelock, lose a stone and stop wearing hush puppies, he could be our next leader.' This joke passed recently among friends of the Health Minister. It was a backhanded allusion to his carelessness about dress and a compliment to his record in a sensitive department and the ease with which he defends positions, without needing to rely on the crutches of his civil servants.

A right-wing minister, keen to be a kingmaker in the succession to Mrs Thatcher, volunteered recently in private that Ken Clarke was the man that his candidate would have to beat — not other more senior centre-left politicians, like Michael Heseltine, Peter Walker, or James Prior.

Clarke's appeal was underlined in a *Times* poll of 87 new Tory MPs. They preferred Norman Tebbit as their next leader, if Mrs Thatcher stepped down soon; but 43-year-old Clarke was their favourite should she stay until after the next general election. They like his clear and relaxed style in the Commons and his sideless approachability. He lacks the abrasiveness of today's Tory backstreet Poujadists and the toffee nose of the established middle-class members.

Ken Clarke is the most attractive and able of the few genuine meritocrats that the Conservatives have so far produced in Parliament. He is classless, with the hard-headed rationality of the East Midlands and a voracious appetite for work. All this he combines with an ability to relax completely drinking beer, watching Nottingham Forest or West Bromwich Albion, listening to jazz at Ronnie Scott's or the Pizza Express, or visiting his beloved France. For him, Europe is more than an abstract ideal.

Heathman

He does not even seem to mind the subtle discrimination that Mrs Thatcher has practised against him by refusing fully to recognise his talents. Another man would have found it hard to work for so long under Norman Fowler, even though they are good friends from Cambridge University Conservative Association days. Those who know them both rate Clarke higher. But Clarke does not seem to envy Fowler his position in Cabinet and it was Fowler who persuaded Mrs Thatcher to promote Ken to Health Minister under him at the DHSS.

Clarke accepts that he will never be accepted by Mrs Thatcher as 'one of us'. He remains almost as Europhile as Edward Heath, in whose corner he fought hard against the Thatcher challenge for the Leadership in 1974. Clarke argues fiercely for the things he believes in — like the need for the Tories to defend a cost-effective National Health Service — and resisted strong constituency pressure in favour of curbing the Abortion Act and restoring hanging. Once, in 1976, he even tried to get Continental licensing hours imported, despite a threat from Sir Bernard Braine to speak against him in his constituency.

In private there is unexpected warmth for him among Northern Labour MPs. The man who first showed him round the Commons when he arrived in 1970 was Don Concannon, the giant ex-miner, whom he had fought (hopelessly) for Mansfield in 1964 and 1966. Ken is Nottingham-born, son of a former pit electrician who turned watchmaker and jeweller, and was brought up in pit villages in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

A star is born

Ken left this background when he moved from Nottingham High School to Gonville and Caius, Cambridge. In politics, Heathian Euro-idealism had more attraction for him than Labour's arguments between Gaitskellites and Bevanites. He starred at Cambridge, becoming chairman of the Conservative Association in 1961 and President of the Union in 1963.

Without family money and married in 1964 to Gillian, whom he met at Cambridge, the Bar was an obvious place to make his way by his own wits. After a scholarship at Gray's Inn, he worked for 16 years on the midland circuit, often on workmen's compensation cases. Apart from the two Mansfield elections, he limited his political activity to writing pamphlets for the Birmingham Bow Group, including one on 'Immigration, Race and Politics'. His real break came when he was adopted to recapture Rushcliffe, on the fringe of his native Nottingham. In his maiden speech, he thanked the new Education Secretary, Margaret Thatcher, for approving a purpose-built comprehensive school in his new constituency.

Today Clarke laughs off talk about being a 'future Tory PM'. The label was first hung round his neck more than 12 years ago by the *Nottingham Journal*. He knows that his only real strength is in Parliament, where his skill at the despatch box and his ability in running his department are recognised. He does not have the status of potential rivals like Heseltine in the country or at Tory party conferences.

Unless and until Mrs Thatcher provides him with a higher platform by promoting him to the Cabinet, Clarke's best chance of establishing a constituency in the wider Tory party is by proving himself a defender of a cost-effective NHS, though this is not an eye-catching role. He has been more willing than any Health Minister since Enoch Powell to attack the profits of the drug companies, but this will not win him standing ovations at Brighton. He wants to force competitive outside tendering for hospital laundries and cleaning in order to cut costs — which arouses the fury of NHS unions, but evokes little positive admiration from BUPA-worshippers.

He moved fast to tighten up on doctors' night-time deputising services, after recent cases — fast enough to provoke complaints from the BMA. He also acted with unbureaucratic speed when he found that banned medicines could still be prescribed. He is least skilful when forced to carry the political can for some ideological idiocy — like charging foreigners for hospital care, despite the enormous cost of administering the system.

Jazz time

Clarke has the advantage of a brute's constitution and a massive capacity for work. He showed this as a backbencher and Whip and Opposition junior spokesman, even before Mrs Thatcher made him a junior minister at Transport in 1979. A colleague tells with astonishment of how Clarke, after a heavy Parliamentary evening, could spend an hour or two at Ronnie Scott's, work on briefs on the last train to Birmingham, spend the next day in court and be back again in the House by 6pm — still cheerful and relaxed.

Will Mrs Thatcher recognise his ability in her expected September reshuffle? She has no fear that he would plot against her. Although a natural 'Heathman', he has never been active in any anti-Thatcher grouping. The closest he comes to 'plotting' is in his little known 'Amesbury Group' — named after the street on which he lives in South Birmingham. It is a dining club of young Tory ministers, who meet together to try to ensure that they do not develop complete tunnel vision.

Whatever Mrs Thatcher decides to do about Clarke, his greatest advantages, of course, are that he has an ultra-safe seat and that at the general election after next (in 1992?) he will still be only 52.

Andrew Roth

No 4 in the series will appear next month.

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DIARY

Tony Paterson

Warsaw

One of the underground Solidarity cartoons circulating in Warsaw shows a worker, cap in hand, telling a Communist Party official: 'I have spent the last 40 years building socialism and now I would like something to eat.' The joke is an attack on the regime for failing to beat Poland's food shortage crisis, but for uninitiated Westerners its total contempt for Polish-style communism is what is striking. 'You won't meet any communists in Poland,' I was told. I didn't. For a country that this year celebrates 40 years of communist rule, loathing for the system runs deeper than I thought possible. The giant Soviet-built Palace of Culture that dominates the Warsaw skyline is a physical symbol of the system. It was built by the Russians as Stalin's gift to the Polish people shortly after the last war. Today it is nicknamed 'St Joseph's Cathedral' and flats that have a view of this extraordinary crenellated skyscraper are cheaper to rent than those which turn their backs on it.

In its more extreme forms, contempt for the system has provoked a sort of wild over-reaction among people. American deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe and President Reagan's economic sanctions against Poland are welcomed by some as 'something to make the Russians think'. I even heard this one uttered tongue-in-cheek: 'Hitler was better than the Russians — at least he allowed people to make money.' Making money is an all-consuming pastime in Poland. The authorities recently stepped up their efforts to bring the black market under control but under-the-counter dealing is still rife.

○

Andrej Wajda gained an international reputation for the batch of brilliant films he made about the Solidarity era, but his pre-Solidarity films are more orthodox. *The Promised Land*, made in the 1970s, is about a Pole, a Jew and a German who join forces in turn-of-the-century Klondike era Poland to build a cloth factory in the town of Lodz. The object is to get rich quick, but the factory is burned down only weeks after it is completed. Nevertheless the Pole regains his wealth by marrying the ugly, stupid daughter of a rich German factory owner. The Pole is finally portrayed as the embodiment of capitalist evil swamped by riches and the film ends on an ideologically correct note. Crowds of previously downtrodden workers wave the Red Flag and begin to stone the rich Pole's town mansion.

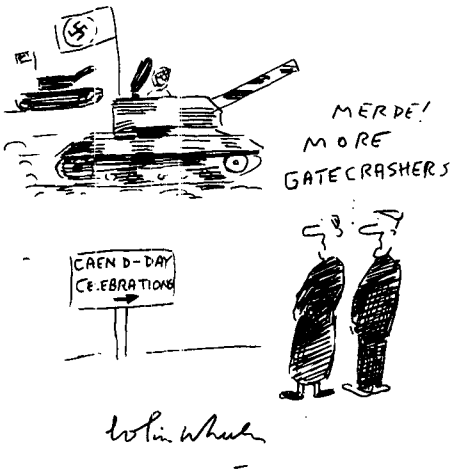
○

As I left the cinema, I was confronted by an almost identical crowd of down-at-heel people. They were queueing up for washing machines at 9.30 at night. Queues are taken as a standard indicator as to to the state of the Polish economy and it is easy to assume that queueing means standing in line for a few hours for goods in short supply. This is not so. Queues, especially for scarce commodities such as washing machines, go on for weeks and sometimes months. There are even queue organising committees that register the positions of those in line and keep up a round-the-clock watch on the shop or warehouse where the goods are to arrive. Each person has to do their share of queue duty and turn up at queue meetings to ensure that their place is kept. The ordinary business of shopping, therefore, becomes a protracted nightmare.

○

Martial law has forced Solidarity to take a back seat as far as opposition to the regime is concerned. Protest now centres in and around the Catholic Church, representing the 80 per cent of Poles said to be faithful. The most recent Church-State confrontation has been over the right to display crucifixes in schools. The authorities, not unreasonably, argued that State schools were lay institutions and not places where crosses should be on display. But they unwisely decided to remove crosses that were put up during the Solidarity period at a school outside Warsaw. This provoked a wave of protest from the Church, students and the Solidarity underground. Fearing serious disruption, the authorities backed down and agreed to compromise by allowing crosses to be restored to the school library.

This time the target is higher education. The authorities recently invoked special powers to annul the election of former Solidarity adviser Klemens Szaniawski to the post of rector at Warsaw University because he has apparently refused to conform to the law stipulating the



'socialist character' of schools. Another former Solidarity adviser, Andrej Wiktor, was prevented from becoming rector of Bolesslaw Bierut University in Wroclaw for the same reasons only a week before Szaniawski was vetoed.

○

The ruling Polish United Workers' Party may have regained control for the time being, but it is evidently not regaining support. Despite proclamations that the party is once again the 'leading force' in the nation, membership has dropped by a third from 3.1 million in 1980 to 2.2 million today. No doubt one of the reasons is that Party members live almost hermetically isolated from ordinary people. They frequent their own Party clubs and societies and are generally viewed as creatures living in a different world. The lid is held down on the rest of society by an efficient security police that continues to crack down on all forms of opposition except the Church, which is subject to more subtle pressures. Official figures show that 427 people were arrested for political offences during the first quarter of 1984.

○

Nobody doubts that the lid will blow off again — but the question is when? Solidarity's call for major anti-government demonstrations, to coincide with official May Day celebrations on 1 May, met with a less enthusiastic response than similar protests a year ago. Now the outlawed union is concentrating its efforts on organising a nationwide boycott of elections to local councils on 17 June. The local electoral system guarantees a majority of seats for the Communist Party on every council. Not surprisingly, Solidarity calls this system a farce and is demanding free elections instead. Meanwhile, the authorities are faced with the problem of the Solidarity Eleven — the group of Solidarity leaders who have been jailed without trial since the declaration of martial law in December 1981. The authorities would rather have no 'political prisoner problem' by 22 July, the fortieth anniversary of Polish socialism. But the eleven are refusing offers of freedom on condition that they leave Poland and have demanded they be released with no strings attached.

ROGER WODDIS

The Long Spoon

Mrs Thatcher will be entertaining P.W. Botha, the South African prime minister, to lunch at Chequers on Saturday.

Welcome to Britain, Mr Botha,
I'm glad to add you to the rota
Of duties that I must perform.
(This is my chairman, Mr Gummer.)
We've had a simply dreadful summer,
I think we're heading for a storm.

You have your problems in Namibia,
As we have ours with France and Libya
(Do try this wine, it's medium dry),
But though apartheid is detested,
With all the millions we've invested,
You're right — 'We must adapt or die'.

The splendid way your country faces
Resistance by the darker races
Suggests you have a panacea
For dealing with my own hardliners.
A homeland for unruly miners?
Why, Pieter, what a *good* idea!

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Time running out for Iran

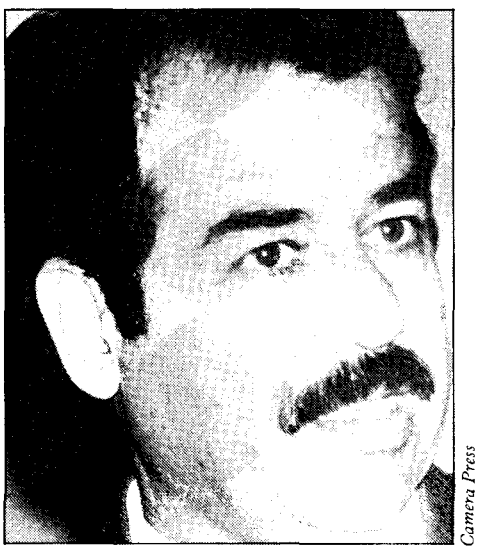
With help coming from both the US and the Soviet Union, Iraq may soon be in a position to end the war, argues Fred Halliday

EVENTS OF THE PAST fortnight suggest that the Gulf war between Iraq and Iran is now moving to a climax. Iran, reacting to an Iraqi oil blockade that has cut its exports by 60 per cent since late April, has broadened the war to include attacks on the ships of Arab states aiding Iraq. In response, the US has increased its aid to these Arab states, while the Soviet Union has despatched SS-21 surface-to-surface missiles to Iraq that can be used to hit Iran's oil-loading facilities. If Iran is to take its opportunity, it must soon launch the all-out land offensive that will destroy Iraqi resistance — and so nullify the attempts of Moscow and Washington to rescue Baghdad. If Iraq can hold out for a few more months, then its own situation, and that of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf that fund it, may be somewhat stronger. Iraq is losing the war, but time is not on Iran's side.

The multiple efforts, combined and competitive, of those who want to block Iran's advance nonetheless come up against two insurmountable obstacles. One is that Iran is not now interested in diplomacy or mediation. The Iranians have listened politely enough to all sorts of mediators, who have gone to Tehran to plead for them to be reasonable; but they have reportedly laughed and sneered when these implorers have left the room. The only way to force Iran to the negotiating table would be to enforce a complete blockade of its oil exports for many months. This is the one thing that would be calculated to weaken the Khomeini regime seriously; Iraq's recent efforts have begun to bite but a complete shutdown of Iran's exports is not an economic or a military certainty in present circumstances. Iran has money in the bank, and even if Kharg Island — its present loading station — were put out of action, the Iranians might be able to build alternative pipelines and loading facilities that would give them an alternative outlet after a period of interruption.

Those who have made diplomatic contact with the Iranians in recent weeks have found them as determined as ever to win. They want not just war compensation of over $100 billion, and an international tribunal to condemn the Iraqi regime, but also its removal and 'punishment'. Whether in this they mean only President Saddam Hussein, or all one million members of the Ba'th Party in a country of 14 million, or something in between, is never made quite clear: when you are on the attack, it is often beneficial to keep your bargaining position vague, and this is something the Iranians have done throughout this war as they did during the 1980 hostages dispute with the US.

Given the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in the war with Iraq, the Iranians are not likely to accept just the head of Saddam. They still hope for the 'liberation' of Iraq, i.e. the installation of a Tehran-backed Islamic regime. The convening in Tehran last week, amid much publicity, of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq indicates that the clerical replacement team is still being kept in readiness.



Camera Press

Hussein: waiting for weapons

The mediators who have appeared on the scene recently all have their own interests at heart. The government of the United Arab Emirates has been aiding Iraq financially and is tied to Saudi Arabia through membership of the Gulf Co-operation Council. It is hoping to shield itself from the force of Iranian retribution by an appearance of neutrality.

Syria, which has just sent a mission to Iran, is playing the opposite game. It shares a common interest with Tehran: to isolate and bring down the Baghdad government. Syria's calls for containment of the war merely serve to confirm Tehran's policy of splitting Iraq off from its other Arab allies. The bottom line remains the same: as long as Iran can go on exporting its oil it will not be interested in diplomacy. For mediation, both sides have to listen: but, in this war, Khomeini will not pick up the phone.

THE ONLY other way to force Iran to negotiate is to tip the military balance on the ground so decisively that all prospects of its defeating Iraq disappears. The military measures taken by the US in recent days may go some way to re-assuring the other Arab states of the Gulf, but they do not materially alter Iraq's position on the ground. These Arab states do not have the significant land forces needed to bolster Iraqi defences, and the Saudis would be reluctant to commit their air force to direct battle with Iran, given the very few combat pilots they have, apart from Pakistani and Taiwanese mercenaries.

US policy has been to bolster Iraq in certain obvious ways: increasing food exports, encouraging construction of new oil pipeline export facilities and, perhaps most importantly, providing Iraq with US intelligence material on Iranian troop movements. If the Iraqis are not surprised by the next Iranian assault, this will be largely due to the efforts of the NSA and the CIA. (These agencies may also feel surprisingly at home in Iraq, for when the Ba'thists first came to power in Iraq, in a military coup in February 1963 in which hundreds of communists were murdered, they received CIA backing in their action.)

The irony is that, when the Ba'thists came to power for the second time in 1968, they became allies of the USSR and were, from 1969 until 1975, the targets of a major CIA destabilisation campaign carried out in tandem with the Shah of Iran. It was this Soviet-Iraqi alliance which the Russians are now so keen to preserve, and which accounts for their willingness to supply Baghdad with modern weapons. Having been chased out of Egypt and Somalia by former allies who suddenly turned to the West in return for financial and strategic inducements, the Russians seem committed to hanging on in Iraq.

This implicit US-Soviet alliance in support of Baghdad stops short, however, of providing the Iraqis with what they most need, namely offers of combat support. This, and this alone, would be sufficient to stop the Iranians, if their massed troops make a major breakthrough. Reagan has intimated that he might supply air cover, but this would be very difficult for him. The Russians and the Americans have their own domestic reasons for wanting to avoid any such direct commitment: in neither country would it command much support. They are also determined to avoid any appearance of great power co-operation at a time when their overall relations are at a low point.

These outside powers may therefore be successful in containing the war to the two belligerents, and the speculators of the international insurance market may force the major oil importers to find other sources of oil. But in the land battle between the two states, where the war will be decided, the issue still hangs very much in the balance. Iran has just announced that 'blasphemy-crushing waves of the sacred Islamic revolution' are ready to deal the decisive blow to Saddam Hussein.

If this blow comes, there may be little his friends in Moscow, or in the CIA, can do to help him.

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Crisis, what crisis?

Rising interest rates are all right for the US banks but not for poor countries, explains David Blake

FOR ONE of the world's leading banks to come under suspicion of going bust is unfortunate. For two to do so in as many weeks looks rather like a world financial crisis.

Continental Illinois has been bailed out by a massive rescue package supported by the US Federal Reserve Board, the American equivalent of the Bank of England. Manufacturers Hanover of New York has so far got away with simply a sharp drop in its share price, but no wise person would bet that it (or other like banks) are yet safely out of the wood.

There are rational grounds for fears about the world banking system now, but there have been almost equally good grounds for being worried during all of the past two years, when we have not had a crisis. What has changed is that, having perversely ignored these factors for a long time, markets have suddenly become dominated by people who, perhaps equally perversely, are now choosing to exaggerate them.

Simply put, the sequence of events in the past few months has been as follows. This spring Argentina had big problems in renegotiating its debts with Western commercial banks. It is just one of 30-odd less-developed countries (LDCs) and nations of Eastern Europe which either defaulted on payments, or renegotiated their outstanding loans.

Once every quarter (31 March was the last date) US banks need to know whether they will get the latest instalment of loan interest due to them. If not, the loan in question gets marked as a 'non-performing loan' and has to be accounted for accordingly. At the end of March, it looked as if the Argentine loans would go bad on them. Although a last minute compromise was arranged, the system was reminded that things could go wrong.

Then, six weeks ago, the Federal Reserve announced a move that it had been increasingly obvious would come. Worried by signs of a runaway boom in the US (with economic growth running at an annual rate of 8 per cent), it had decided to tighten its monetary policy — and in the process to push up interest rates. That spread new fears that, with higher interest costs, financial institutions might go bust.

It also added a new turn of the screw to LDC problems. Every time interest rates go up one percentage point, it adds $400 million a year to Argentina's debt payments, $700 million to Brazil's and similar sums to other countries. Interest rates are now so high that Latin American countries are paying back more in interest than they are getting in new loans. This not merely imposes an intolerable financial strain on them; it means that they have little incentive to be nice to commercial banks.

As the chart shows, the main LDCs are expected to be heavy net payers of money *to* the West for the rest of this decade. In purely cash terms, they would be better off unilaterally opting out of the now yearly round of negotiating new loans to pay off the old and to pay the extra interest. With about $340 million of Latin American loans outstanding, that prospect is a nightmare that all on Wall Street now talk about endlessly.

YET THE LATEST round of problems did not start over LDC loans at all. It began with a run on Continental Illinois, whose problems reflect another facet of America's troubled banking system. Continental Illinois featured in this decade's other great debacle of American banking — losing about $2,000 million in bad loans it became involved with Penn Square, a small bank in Oklahoma. Penn Square lent money to the energy industry and did so very badly. In the process, it succeeded in talking large sums out of the established American banks.

For the past two years Continental Illinois has been trying to rebuild its image. To do so it borrowed increasingly heavily from banks all around the world, using its overseas branches in London and elsewhere to make up for the fact that it is not allowed branches in its home state of Illinois and thus has no deposits from ordinary US customers.

It is easy to raise money in this way when your credit is high. But the cash can go out just as quickly as it comes in. This is even more true because of the system of American banking insurance. Deposits of up to $100,000 are 'guaranteed' by a government agency, so small depositors are secure. But above that limit you are on your own. Because Continental Illinois has had to rely almost exclusively on large deposits, roughly 85 per cent of its money was not insured. So, when rumour started in Japan that it was in trouble, bankers all round the world pulled the plug. American banks tried themselves to put together a rescue package and failed; they needed the Fed to guarantee that it would lend 'as much as it took' to stop the bank from going under.

If a bank as big as Continental Illinois failed, it could put in trouble every bank to which it owed a significant amount of money (which means pretty much every major bank in the US). So it is not surprising that speculators started looking around to see if any other banks were at risk. Last week they found a suitable candidate in Manufacturers Hanover.

The disturbing thing about the Manny Hanny case is that, as far as everyone can tell, there is nothing wrong with it — apart from the fact that, at just over 9 per cent, its share of loans to Latin America is the highest of any of the big banks. But there is no suggestion that its Latin American loans are unusually bad. Simply being so involved was enough to cause suspicion.

THAT SUSPICION is deepened by signs that the four leading Latin American debtors — Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia — may be getting together to work out a much tougher common line with the commercial banks. At a meeting of the presidents of these four countries last month, they demanded lower interest rates, longer repayment periods and have called a debtors' summit meeting in Bogota on 14 and 15 June — just after the West's world economic summit in London from 7 to 9 June.

The scale of the problem for these countries is growing all the time. They have already imposed stringent austerity at home, something which has given the newly-elected democratic government in Argentina a particularly bad start to its term of office. But that austerity will not be enough for these countries. They will also have to export more if they are to go on paying the high interest bills which they face. Yet the West, which ought to buy these exports, is unlikely to do so. Recent calculations suggest that, for industrial countries to be able to absorb enough goods from the LDCs, their own economies would have to grow by about 4.2 per cent a year, instead of 3-3½ per cent being

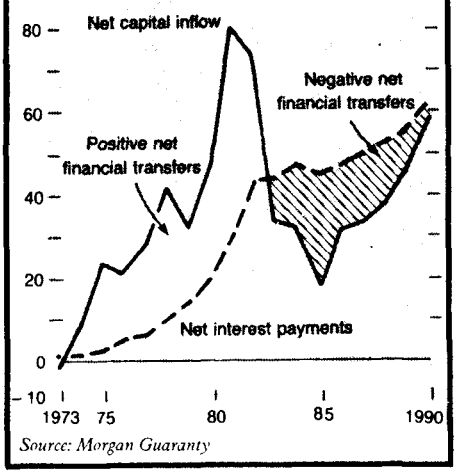
US bank leading to Latin American countries

	Top 9 banks	Next 15 banks	Regional banks	Total
	($bn, at end 1983)			
Mexico	**14.1**	**5.3**	**6.9**	**26.3**
Brazil	**13.3**	**4.3**	**3.1**	**20.7**
Venezuela	**7.6**	**2.1**	**1.5**	**11.3**
Argentina	**5.4**	**2.0**	**1.2**	**8.5**
Total	**40.4**	**13.7**	**12.7**	**66.8**
Capital	**31.5**	**14.9**	**33.0**	**79.4**
Growth (fall) since June 1982	**2.6**	**1.5**	**(0.6)**	**3.5**
Exposure as a percentage of capital	**128**	**92**	**38**	**84**

Source: Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council

Net financial transfers for 21 major LDCs

in billions of dollars



Source: Morgan Guaranty

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forecast by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

That is why attention keeps coming back to the question of interest rates. Of the total LDC debt of around $700 million, roughly half was borrowed at interest rates which adjust automatically to those prevailing in the market. As time goes by, this proportion is rising as previously traditional 'fixed interest' debt is replaced by 'floating rate' money. So LDCs are immediately hit by rising rates.

The US favours a technical solution to this problem, usually referred to as 'rate-capping'. This would work rather like the schemes many building societies apply when interest rates rise. The interest payment which countries have to make on a loan would not be allowed to go above a certain level; if market rates were higher than that, the difference would not be paid but simply added on to the outstanding debt.

This would at least cut down the number of occasions on which banks and countries have to haggle, but it would do nothing to deal with the fundamental problem — which is that, when interest rates to up, the LDCs lose money. The change would be cosmetic. So would other schemes being mentioned such as allowing banks six months instead of three before they have to announce that a loan is 'non-performing'.

The interest rate problem goes back to the start of the story — the US economy and the US financial markets. The Federal government is running an economic policy designed to create rapid expansion, with a huge Budget deficit being used to stimulate growth very much as Keynesians have traditionally argued it should be.

To get the growth it wants, it needs to borrow nearly $200,000 million of new money a year, five times as much as the 21 leading LDC borrowers put together. At the same time, private borrowers in America need money to finance the investment which the boom justifies. Because the American economy is going so well, they can all afford to pay interest rates five percentage points above the going rate of inflation. The problem is that the poor countries can't.

David Blake is Home Editor of The Times.

SOUTH AFRICA

Botha's backyard bother

As the South African leader arrives here, Howard Barrell reports on the dispossessed

Johannesburg

ARRIVING IN London at about the same time this week as the South African Prime Minister — though by a different route — is a letter to the Queen whose contents are likely to challenge any assurance of liberalisation P. W. Botha mixes with pleasantries during lunch at No 10.

The letter is from a black community of about 2,000 people living on what apartheid terms a 'black spot' about 150 miles south east of Johannesburg near a small country town called Wakkerstroom. They were given the land in trust in 1904 in the name of Edward VII for 'good behaviour', and they can see no good reason why those they call the 'Boers' should now be taking it away from them.

Nor can they see any justification for their being forced to join the estimated three and a half million people apartheid social engineering has already uprooted and resettled in order to ensure the geographical separation of the races. Hence the Ngema clan's appeal to Buckingham Palace.

Their destination is likely to be a tin-hut resettlement camp about 125 miles further east, adjoining Swaziland. And, if a massive proposed land deal between the South African government and the submissive pro-Pretoria Swaziland ruling group becomes a reality, this would mean the 2,000 would join the estimated 500,000 black people who would lose their South African citizenship and become Swazis overnight.

Their settlement — known as Kwangema and comprising 5,007 morgen (over 10,000 acres) — lies close to Driefontein, another threatened black community whose leader, Saul Mkhize, was shot dead by a policeman while addressing an anti-resettlement meeting last year (see *NS* 8 April 1983). The policeman has since been acquitted on criminal charges for shooting what a local judge termed an 'arrogant' Black man.

The case of the Ngema people is among the less spectacular on apartheid's current resettlement agenda. Some 250,000 Black people in the three official black townships and five unofficial squatter camps around Cape Town are due to be moved to an area known as Khayalitsha. At present, Khayalitsha is a vast, desolate white scar dotted with tin resettlement huts and long-drop toilets, which has been cleared among the sand dunes and coastal brush about 25 miles from Cape Town.

Near the historic siege town of Ladysmith in Natal 14 Black communities numbering about 100,000 people are due to be moved against their will from land they bought as freehold between 70 and 100 years ago. Their destination is a belt of resettlement villages already containing some of the worst unemployment, poverty and infant mortality in South Africa.

One Ladysmith resistance leader told me: 'If the government wants this pen of mine, they will go and make a law that says pens like this belong to the government. And they will come and take it by law.'

A broad spread of opposition political leaders has warned that, more than any other apartheid measure, land dispossession and the continuing forced resettlement of Black people could spark off the violence that has so long been predicted.

For the larger Black opposition groups like the United Democratic Front, an alliance of about 560 Black organisations, this dispossession of the Black African majority and their confinement to 10 impoverished ethnic bantustans — comprising only 13 per cent of South Africa's land mass — exposes as a farce Botha's claims of liberalisation.

In their view, the new constitution to be introduced later this year, which will give limited power sharing rights to the small so-called Coloured (mixed race) and Indian portions of the Black population in a segregated tricameral parliament, is a piece of gerrymandering aimed at finding allies for the dominant white minority against the African majority.

Mass opposition to forced removals has increased markedly here since February when, in the face of months of resistance by members of another Black community at a place called Mogopa (see *NS* 9 December 1983), armed police surrounded the village in a pre-dawn raid, forcibly loaded the people onto trucks, and took them to a resettlement camp more than 100 miles away.

The oldest member of the Kwangema community, Alfred Ngema, maintains the government will have to 'beat' the community to get them to move. According to a leader of resistance to the Ladysmith removals, 'We know that being resettled is like walking into hell with your eyes wide open. How can we do that?' □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

In a 'burial at sea' yesterday from a boat a little way off Pier Head, Liverpool, dignified farewells were said to three defunct electric shavers, ranging in age from 23 to nearly 30. Their owner, Capt. Keith Taylor, 47, a marine pilot from Ruthin in North Wales, said: 'When I sent them to the manufacturer, asking for servicing and work parts to be replaced, they broke the news gently that the models were long out of production. We all thought this was a decent way to lay them to rest'. — *Daily Telegraph* (R Pash)

Couples contemplating separation or divorce should make arrangements for the care of their pet dogs said the Duchess of Norfolk when she opened the National Canine Defence League HQ in London. — *Northern Echo* (V. J. Arthey)

The English Tourist Board said yesterday that the May Day holiday should be moved to June or September because too many Bank holidays fall together. — *The Times* (Simon Gold)

JUST OUT — The Minority Rights Group's latest Reports:

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● MICRONESIA and PALAU

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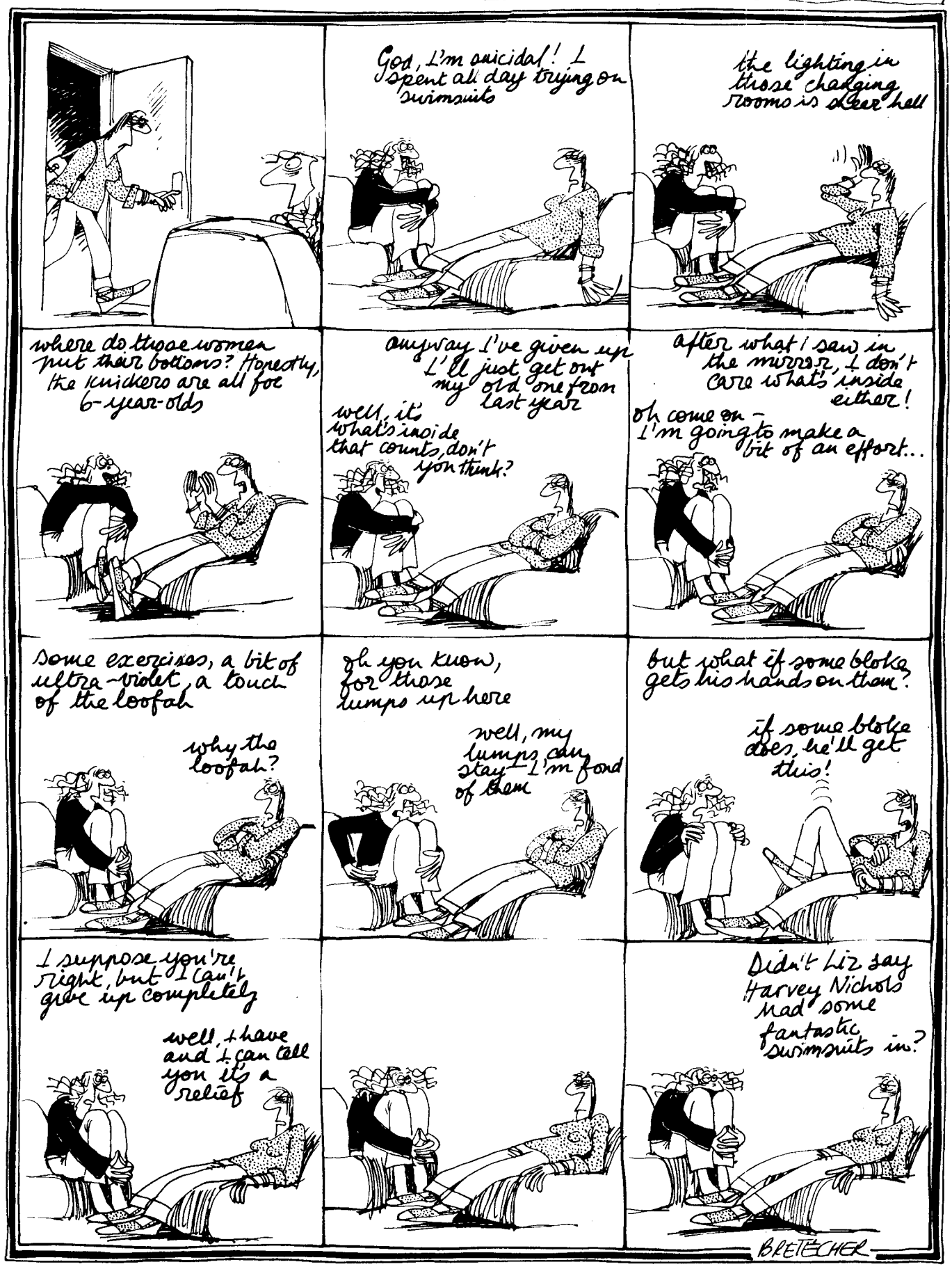
BRETECHER

HERE COMES SUMMER


God, I'm suicidal! I spent all day trying on swimsuits
the lighting in those changing rooms is Dante's hell
where do those women put their bottoms? Honestly, the knickers are all for 6-year-olds
anyway I've given up I'll just get out my old one from last year
well, it's what's inside that counts, don't you think?
after what I saw in the mirror, I don't care what's inside either!
oh come on - I'm going to make a bit of an effort...
some exercises, a bit of ultra-violet, a touch of the loofah
why the loofah?
oh you know, for those lumps up here
well, my lumps can stay - I'm fond of them
but what if some bloke gets his hands on them?
if some bloke does, he'll get this!
I suppose you're right, but I can't give up completely
well, I have and I can tell you it's a relief
Didn't Liz say Harvey Nichols had some fantastic swimsuits in?
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Revolution for devolution

A.J.S. Walker, political organiser, London branch, Scottish Nationalist Party

The English tend to be hopelessly confused about their own imperialism and that pack of cards, the so-called United Kingdom. Bernard Crick (*NS* 18 May) imagines that Scottish nationalists are only extreme federalists.

By independence for Scotland, we mean not only our own sovereign parliament but also our own central bank, currency, exchange rates, foreign policy, diplomatic service and armed forces. Deciding between EFTA and the EEC and whether or not to join Nato will be quite as pressing problems as negotiating treaties of perpetual peace and co-operation with England, Northern Ireland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Crick does not seem to appreciate that the middle-class Scots who run our separate legal, educational, ecclesiastical and administrative systems and teach our history in our schools are much more dangerous to the UK than working-class Scots whose national identity in some cases consists only of such trivia as accents, football, tartan and booze.

These working-class Scots are, however, beginning to realise that if they wish to live in a socialist country, voting for the Unionist Labour Party is a complete waste of time.

William McDowell, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Bernard Crick's article on the Forum Report (*NS* 18 May) was extremely incisive. As an Ulster Unionist, not only can I agree with much of what he said on the actual Forum Report document itself, I can agree to a surprising extent with his comments on contemporary Ulster and on attitudes and misconceptions prevalent on the UK mainland.

For me the most useful paragraph of Bernard Crick's article was his last. The people of the Province cannot provide a solution to the divisions which exist within the British Isles; we just unfortunately happen to live on the bit of land where there is no clearly dominant culture.

Structures representing 'joint authority' could only be worked by Unionists if the South changed its constitution, dropping the claim to sovereignty over the entire 32 counties of Ireland. The IRA is both a political and a military problem; as things presently stand both Westminster and the Dail have not faced up to the radical political measures needed, and the tough security actions needed, to eradicate terrorism.

Though I do not believe that the people of this Province can of themselves sort out the difficult dilemmas posed by the complex history of these islands, it is possible that if the British and Irish governments persist with their present policies the Ulster Protestants will be pushed into a position where they will bring about a clear division of people and respective territories on this island.

Red baiting — not our business

John Trinkl, disarmament reporter, New York Guardian, *USA*

I read the article on 'Party blocks' by Tony Catterall (NS 11 May) with great interest. Sharing experiences, tactics and strategies between the European peace movement and movements in other countries is vitally important. The *New Statesman* has been offering thoughtful articles on the European movement which are useful for our work here.

However, I was greatly disturbed at the thrust of this article, which all but called for kicking out communists from the peace movement and hailed a potential split in the movement: 'Many people are now coming to the conclusion that a split will have to be provoked to save the movement.'

I think this is a disastrous course. Granted, that problems are often encountered with cadre organisation in mass movements. And granted that there is a particular problem of very pro-Soviet communists in the peace movement (we have those problems, too). However, the solution recommended — kicking the communists out — will hardly strengthen the movement.

There has been a great deal of experience with anti-communism here in the US. By and large — and to its credit — the peace movement has refused to be swayed by anti-communist arguments and has been relatively non-exclusionary. To do otherwise — in the name of getting rid of certain political problems which do exist — only weakens the movement. The US labour movement was crippled when communists were expelled in the late 1940s and early 1950s; it has scarcely recovered. The US peace movement during the Vietnam War — after a number of early attempts at excluding communists — learned that this was a harmful tactic.

The movement should not do the government's dirty work for it. Communists are not the only ones who can be divisive and they don't have a monopoly on political mistakes. Over here, Reagan is always talking about communist influence (or control) of the peace movement. To its credit, the peace movement has not capitulated on this and has asserted the right of all who want to, to take part in the struggle for peace. This can be done while maintaining at the same time the right to criticise different groups' strategies and practice. Political struggle is far superior to calls for splits. Provoking a split will hardly save the movement, but will seriously weaken it. Reagan would like nothing better.

Palumberings on

Jules Lubbock, London NW3

I regret that Mr MacEwen (Letters 11 May) dislikes what was intended as good-natured banter at the expense of Mr Palumbo and his supporters. However, more importantly, he has got his facts wrong in three particulars.

First — when I called those pillars of the architectural establishment who support Mr Palumbo's plans for the Mansion House site 'comedians' I was referring to their contributions to the Inquiry not to their own architecture.

Second — my criticism of Sir John Summerson's account of the origin of the London Square was neither irrelevant nor based upon a misreading. Not irrelevant because Sir John was called primarily because he is the acknowledged expert on the history of Metropolitan Improvements and claims that the proposed Mansion House Square falls into this class. His consistent view has been that we owe such schemes to enlightened patrons and great architects, to whom Palumbo and Mies are worthy successors. I demonstrated that, far from such people enjoying a monopoly over urban improvements, the people's park at Moorfields came first.

Nor was it based upon a misreading. In *Georgian London* Sir John specifically refers to 'the building of the Piazza' in Covent Garden as 'the first great contribution to English urbanism', and not, as Mr MacEwen claims, 'the first square designed in the Palladian manner.'

To do Sir John credit, he has always been as interested in land-use as in style. His unawareness of Moorfields, however, is astonishing. On p.125 of the Penguin edition he talks of Finsbury Circus as an 'improvement' built on the site of Bedlam in 1814. In fact it was only partly built on Bedlam, partly on Moorfields to the north as a result of an Act of 1812 obtained by the City of London to annul their trusteeship over those 10 acres of public recreation space so as develop the land for profit. Some improvement! No wonder Sir John is able to consider the loss of cheap and useful shops, popular pubs in this uniquely surviving fragment of Victorian London as an improvement.

Finally — I did not claim that direct action and rigorous planning regulations had been the *only* way to protect the public interest in the past four centuries. Statutory planning regulation did not begin in the 19th C as the research of Summerson and Brett-James demonstrates. The Privy Council was the administrative, executive and judicial branch of the government of the Crown (and remains so, I believe, in theory). In the 16/17th centuries the Council responded to the complaints of Londoners about the encroachment of public open space through proclamation, public inquiries, and the sponsoring of statute. I was saying that in our current battles to control developers we do well to remember the efforts of the London Apprentices, the benchers of Lincolns Inn, the parishioners of St Martin's and the Aldermen of the City to whom we owe, in large measure, what remains of Moorfields and Lincoln's Inn Fields, as well as Leicester Square and Covent Garden.

A WEEK IN POLITICS
Channel 4

The 1911 Official Secrets Act passed through the Commons in half an hour.

On Friday 1 June 1984 at 8pm MPs debate it again.

Gerald Kaufman proposes the repeal of section 2, **Michael Mates** opposes; **Jonathan Aitken** recalls being a victim of the Act; **Alf Dubs** presses the case of his jailed constituent, **Sarah Tisdall**; and **Ivor Stanbrook** says abolition would be folly.

A WEEK IN POLITICS
Channel 4
8pm Friday

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Jonathan Mirsky

Hot and cold

Stubborn Weeds: Popular and Controversial Chinese Literature after the Cultural Revolution
ed. PERRY LINK *Blond & Briggs* £14.95
Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation
ed. HELEN F. SIU and ZELDA STERN
Oxford £12.95

China watchers are often charged with rummaging about in a developing country's affairs, looking for bad news. But the largest number of China watchers live not in London, Washington or even Moscow but in China where keeping track of 'warm and cold winds' is a matter of survival.

Survival is not putting it too high. After the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four in late 1976, when the Writers Association finally reconvened, it required several minutes to read out the names of those who had died before their time during the Cultural Revolution.

In the superb introduction to his collection of fiction, poetry and drama from the 'thaw' of 1979-80, Perry Link, Professor of Oriental Languages at UCLA, underlines the internal concern with political directives and literature: 'Most people who think and talk about the literature of the People's Republic of China want to understand the question of political control. This is generally as true inside China as outside.'

Fear, Link observes, is the key, 'a vague but omnipresent fear of criticism and punishment... no disincentive [for Chinese writers] loomed as large as the danger to one's career, family, and self that might result from criticism.'

Literature is a political tool in China where writers, as Stalin used to say, are seen as the engineers of their readers' souls. From Mao, who in 1942 laid down the basic rule for writers — that their work must serve the State — to Deng Xiaoping, who oversaw the Anti-Rightist campaign of the late Fifties, which he still defends, and who in 1980-81 ordered the detention of most leading intellectual dissidents, China's leaders have kept an eye on their soul-engineers.

'We "bourgeois" westerners must first set aside our notions about the primacy of the writer,' says Link.

> From the standpoint of the control system the primary relationship on the literary scene is that between readers and top leadership. The whole point of literature, so viewed, is to cause readers to think what the top leadership feels it best that they think. Correct thoughts in turn serve Party policy...

1981 and yet another image of Mao is removed from public display as the cold wind blows against him — one of Liu Heung Shing's striking photographs from *China after Mao* (Penguin)

Link provides a precise account of how this control mechanism actually works. The mechanism is, of course, well known to Chinese intellectuals for whom listening to its every tick and creak is as automatic as looking both ways when crossing the road. For us Link shows how even apparent thaws and relaxations, which are so reassuring to friends of China abroad, are the effects of deliberately fanned 'warm winds'. The outpouring of critical literature during the Peking Spring of 1978-79 was officially permitted and encouraged because Deng Xiaoping and his protégés wanted the Mao-dominated past to look bad. When writers shifted their attention to a discussion of how the system itself had gone wrong, down came the clamp.

> ... with the increased elbow room that writers enjoyed in the late 1970s, they had begun departing from their assigned role of transmitting received wisdom and were now expressing their own views on social morality and the fate of the nation.

The play *What If I Really Were?* in Link's collection illustrates how the warm wind/cold wind treatment operates. Written in 1979 and published in China for only a restricted audience, the play became the focus of intense Party analysis. It was based on the actual case of an ordinary young man who by impersonating a high official obtained every kind of favour from wristwatches to sex. The urban imposter in *If I Really Were*, who is only trying to get himself released from rural labour by pretending to be the son of a great man, is ideologically unacceptable for several reasons: he is central, not peripheral; he is sympathetic, not repulsive; worst of all, the action of the play exists not in the Bad Past but in the Good Present.

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'Of course,' says a positively-portrayed old veteran in the play, 'we aren't denying that this is an evil created by the Gang of Four, but the Gang of Four were toppled two years ago and there are still comrades as dishonest as this. It's a tragedy for our Party.'

The imposter himself bursts out at the moment of his unveiling, 'You can't say I'm the only one fooling people. No. Everyone is in this game.'

Mao's Harvest, edited by Yale's Helen Siu and freelance Asian specialist Zelda Stern offers a different, and equally important, selection of poems and stories from the same period. Its introduction concentrates on the writers themselves — we can look at their mugshots — the so-called Mao Generation of disillusioned young intellectuals who grew up in China after the 1949 Communist victory.

> The New Realism of 1979-1981... portrayed a society struggling with social and economic problems; a political system caught up in corruption, opportunism, and bureaucratism; and a people emotionally scarred by political disruptions brought about by their leaders.

In the 1979 poem 'General, You Can't Do This', the poet addresses an unnamed revolutionary hero who orders the obliteration of a kindergarten so that he can erect a mansion for himself. What the 'concerned central department' wanted to know was, 'Whom are you writing about?' (Link, in his introduction, says that one of the problems for authors of critical literature is the volume of mail they receive from those imagining themselves to be targets. This is called 'self-seating' in China.) The poet, himself a Party member, made things worse by adding that the leadership is made up of peasants who have not shed 'the backward nature of their class'.

Peasants, who are supposed to be shown as leathery and wise, come in for more stick in 'The Corner Forsaken by Love', a short story from 1980 by Zhang Xian, an older writer who was purged for three years during the Anti-Rightist drive of the late Fifties, and again for more than a decade during and after the Cultural Revolution. Zhang's villagers catch a young unmarried pair of real lovers (sex is a taboo literary theme), drive the girl to suicide and beat the boy nearly to death.

In Jin He's 'Second Encounter', written in 1979, a Party official of imposing reputation sits in judgment on a man he realises saved his life during the Cultural Revolution. Because it 'would not be convenient' (it would ruin his career) he keeps his secret to himself. According to the Maoist canon, such an important man should be written about exclusively in 'bright or dark tones'. Jin He's Deputy Party Secretary Zhu is unmistakeably gray.

Between October 1983 and January of this year a medium cold wind blew on Chinese authors. Several writers and critics grovelled in the pages of *The People's Daily* and Tibetans were warned against 'spiritual pollution' in the works of Sartre. Then the wind blew warm again; only pornography was ruled out. But last week the *Beijing Review* called for more literature that 'takes heart in the future of socialism'. It was, however, the present which concerned the poet of 'General, You Can't Do This'. He speaks for the disillusioned young: 'If your son is a revolutionary, he will leave your mansion in disgust.'

SPAIN
David Gilmour

Evolving

Spain: Change of a Nation
ROBERT GRAHAM *Michael Joseph* £14.95

In the rest of Europe, Spain's attainment of democracy was regarded as almost miraculous, as one of the few positive international developments of the 1970s. The dismantlement of General Franco's institutions and the establishment of a constitutional regime — achieved quickly and peacefully between 1976 and 1979 — seemed to offer an example of compromise and co-operation that could be followed by the dictatorships of Latin America.

In Spain, once the initial euphoria had worn off, the achievement was assessed more sceptically. Predictably, the Francoist Right condemned the changes, complaining that these inflicted Spanish society with inflation, terrorism, pornography and other evils. But the rest of the population also became disenchanted, dismayed that democracy had not provided the solutions to many of the country's problems. While Europeans were hailing Suárez as the greatest statesman on the continent, Spanish opinion polls gave him the support of only a quarter of the electorate.

Robert Graham is neither euphoric nor disillusioned. He describes the solid achievements of the new regime and lists its failures. Suárez was neither the statesman Europeans thought him to be nor the vulgar smoothie of right-wing caricatures. He and his now defunct party deserve credit for their political reforms, just as they deserve criticism

Dror Daniel

Am I hiding behind the door?
I looked under my bed, here I am!
Weakened from passion, my legs bulge.
Sound of steps, I open, here I am!
Cleansed by suffering, my eyes are pure.
Demanded that my filthy tenant quit.
I want to be proud of my existence
So that inwardly there will be respect
For I alone know my secrets.
Whenever I rebelled, under my nostrils
He brought an aroma,
Before my eyes, forbidden foods
. . . Bleeding my saliva . . .
Each poison has sweetness to seduce
And I ate . . .
Death is more lauded than abased life
One day I'll jump from the roof
And he will look at me in stupefaction.

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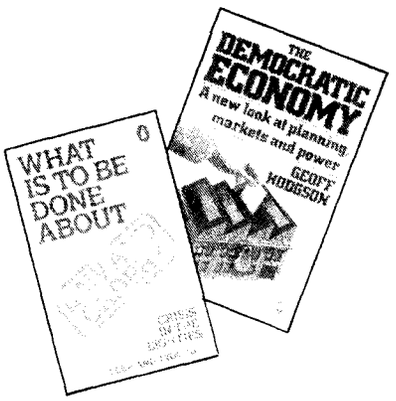

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for their often ineffective and sometimes frivolous behaviour in government.

Compared to their predecessors of the Second Republic, Spain's politicians are a mediocre bunch. Yet they have succeeded where the republicans failed. There are a number of reasons for this — the moderation of the contemporary socialist party, the virtual absence of anticlericalism, a calmer political climate in Europe — but the most important one is the change in the nature of Spanish society since the 1930s. Within a generation five million Spaniards were drained from the land, a process which was carried out even more rapidly and with even less preparation than the Italian exodus from the *mezzogiorno*. This emigration, which destroyed rural communities in much of Castile and Extremadura, released a vast supply of labour for Spain's new industries. The socio-economic transformation of the country, which preceded and paved the way for the political reform, provides the background for Robert Graham's book.

The author, who was for several years the *Financial Times* correspondent in Madrid, writes well about the changes of the Sixties which made Spain one of the ten leading industrial nations in the world. There are interesting chapters on the power of the banks and the rise of the bourgeoisie — a class almost unknown outside Vizcaya and Catalonia until then. In the 1960s Spain saw a transformation not only of its society and economy, but also of so many of its fundamental attitudes. Gone were the quest for glory and the spirit of self-sacrifice — demanded by the *Falange* so stridently for so long — replaced by a corrupting, get-rich-quick mentality well described in this book. Such a change made it easy for all, except a small minority with minds rooted in the Thirties, to regard liberal democracy almost as a natural evolution for the country after Franco's death.

The political reforms carried out after 1975 were more than just the demands which the anti-Francoist opposition had long been making. They were desired by large numbers of apolitical people who realised that a modern country needed modern institutions. And they were carried out not by the democratic opposition but by men of the old regime who, motivated by a blend of conviction and ambition, decided the time had come to change. Robert Graham defines the democratic process as 'the metamorphosis of Francoism: the gradual transformation of an authoritarian regime into a parliamentary democracy.'

In the longest section of the book, the author describes those institutions which have helped the implantation of democracy (the monarchy, the political parties, the Church and the media) and those which have hindered it (the army and the *Guardia Civil*). All these chapters contain coherent analyses of the current situation, but one sometimes feels that the historical context is missing. The author points out in the foreword that he did not intend to write a history of modern Spain, but the organisation of the book, which eschews a narrative approach, requires a more detailed historical background. Graham is knowledgeable about the economy and the institutions but he appears unsure about Spanish history. There are some surprising mistakes (such as the assertion that Cambó was once prime minister) and careless slips over dates and figures. Curiously, for someone who has lived in Spain for so long, there are a fair number of errors in the spelling of Spanish words and names: one short headline from *El Alcázar* is reproduced with three spelling mistakes.

Nevertheless, this is a useful book with a good deal of interesting information. It is also the first major work on contemporary Spain to be published in this country for five years. □

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LOCAL POLITICS
Nicholas Murray

Front-line

The Idea of Neighbourhood: What Local Politics Should Be About
JEREMY SEABROOK *Pluto Press* £3.95

The Left in British politics since 1979 has plunged itself into a cold bath of self-analysis, argument and speculation about the reasons for its electoral failure, that is its failure to secure the sympathy and support in sufficient numbers of the class whose interests it exists to represent.

We have seen revived heroic cliché, sectarian spleen, pragmatic melancholy, pessimism of both will and intellect, accusatory litanies and every variety of impeachment and rallying cry. Writers like Jeremy Seabrook who can nimbly sidestep these rebarbative jargons and take us in a supple and easy style to the real heart of the matter — the working-class communities who are bearing the brunt of the New Right offensive and for whom the whole ideological dance was first choreographed — are rare. This book should be read and pondered by anyone who has yielded to the temptation to sound off about the Labour Party's present and future prospects.

The book is ostensibly about the radical experiment in decentralisation of the Labour council in Walsall in the West Midlands, which opened 32 neighbourhood offices in order to bring the people and the council into more constructive contact with each other and to help to restore self-confidence and the hope of these working-class neighbourhoods that local government could be made to work for them. The experiment lasted two years in spite of intense media harassment and local political opposition coalescing in the now familiar Lib-Con pact which threw Labour out of office in 1982 and halted the expansion of the experiment. However, the neighbourhood offices had proved so popular that the Tories and Liberals were compelled to retain the ones that had been opened.

But the book is about more than this. It is about the nature of working-class community and how it has been served by its own representatives and its capitalist enemies.

To a certain extent the book is a reprise of themes that Seabrook has laid before us in previous books, themes that are to do with the decline of traditional working-class solidarity in the face of the trends in contemporary politics and culture which undermine 'the idea of neighbourhood' and divide working-class people against themselves, replacing the old mutuality and sharing with a dog-eat-dog individualism and an impoverished commercial culture vastly inferior to the traditional working-class culture it has usurped.

Some readers will have difficulty with this part of Jeremy Seabrook's argument even if they agree with his general tenor about the need to work for a 'reconstitution of solidarity'. I see analogies here with the cultural pathology of the late Dr Leavis: a high-minded nostalgia for lost orders of putative organic wholeness which preceded the *arriviste* corruptions of the contemporary mass media. But why are working-class people considered peculiarly prone to the insidious effects of commercial pop culture? Isn't middle-class philistinism, for example, still as resilent and truculently anti-aesthetic as it was when being flayed by Matthew Arnold a century ago? What would a socio-economic analysis of the audience of *Dallas* reveal?

Seabrook's tone — so sure, so sentient and so humane in the deft word pictures of the working-class residents of the Walsall estates of Blakenall, Goscote and Caldmore which form the moving core of the book — wavers, in my judgment, when he begins to interweave into the documentary narrative observations like these: 'The living is done inside. . .inside the head, where the fantasies and the images from the media. . .come to dominate even the most dispossessed. . .' Can we be sure that we know what is going on inside working-class people's heads? Have we any right to presume to know? The inductive leaps are sometimes too precipitate, the intellectual vantage point (in sharp contrast to his sensibility) inescapably *de haut en bas*.

This is more than a quibble because if we are to achieve a regeneration of working-class culture we need to be clear about what our 'idea of neighbourhood' is and whether the traditional working-class community which Seabrook mourns was an ideal model (his feminist critics, most recently Beatrix Campbell in *Wigan Pier Revisited*, would say, emphatically, no) and whether it is in any sense recoverable as the starting point for a revival of those communal values which Seabrook rightly identifies as paramount in any decent vision of social organisation.

But the value of this book is as much in its vivid presentation of the actual plight of working-class communities as in its projected solutions. Some of the descriptions of the quotidian hardships of these Walsall estates are profoundly moving. He is acute, too, in his measuring of the shortfall of the aspirations and feelings of the residents of the estates from the available political machinery. The deep

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alienation of large sections of the working class from what is generally understood as the political is striking. 'So many areas of our life,' writes Seabrook, 'have been labelled "private" and removed from political debate, with the result that what passes for political discussion sounds thin and one-dimensional to those it concerns most closely.'

What is in the end so valuable about Seabrook's book is that it is written from a committed socialist viewpoint that presumes capitalism to be a destructive ideology — he is not one of the tribe of glib revisionists — but at the same time focuses in a very concrete way on the realities of contemporary working-class community. He has little comfort to offer the more zealous parts of the Left whose notion of the working class is over-idealised, and who would probably dismiss the decentralisation initiative as lacking in the requisite amount of combative glamour. Nor would the grouchy pragmatists of the Labour Right take comfort from this uncompromising analysis and the indictment of past municipal Labour neglect.

Time and time again the sharp, unillusioned voice of the British working class sounds from these pages:

> I'll tell you sommat else. The bastards who used to preach to us about the virtue of work and discipline are the same ones who are now preaching to us about the joys of leisure, as long as we take our redundancy money, behave ourselves and keep quiet.

When the Labour Party once again becomes a conduit for these voices it will have regained its formidable strength.

LITERATURE
Nicholas Jacobs

Out of bounds

Goethe Revisited
ed. ELIZABETH M. WILKINSON *John Calder*
£5.95
Goethe: Selected Poems
ed. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON *John Calder*
£9.95

Goethe in Britain has not so far been a success story. With the exceptions of Shelley and Byron, the initial response (including Wordsworth's *and* De Quincy's) was mostly to condemn him as immoral and a sensualist ('fleshimental' was the coinage of one later critic), irreligious and possibly a Jacobin: it was fear of the latter contamination that seems to have prevented Coleridge from translating *Faust*. Subsequently Goethe was taken up by the Victorians, principally by Carlyle, George Eliot and Matthew Arnold, who tended to treat him as an exemplary sage and prophet, and to ignore his poetry. That he was also taken up by faded figures like Lowes Dickinson and Middleton Murry can hardly enhance his cause, though Oscar Wilde's admiration for him perhaps can. Recently it has been shown (by Ian Britain in his remarkably underdiscussed *Fabianism and Culture*) how much the Webbs, particularly Sidney, were influenced by him, and how the ideas of community and social duty among the earliest Fabians came partly from Goethe.

Goethe Revisited is not on the whole for the uninitiated, as its title suggests (the German quotations are mostly untranslated, which seems ungenerous in a book supported by both the Arts Council and the Goethe Institute). However it does contain one most unusual essay, 'Sexual Attitudes in Goethe's Life and Works', by the editor herself, which deserves to be widely known.

This piece, broadcast by the BBC in 1982 (the 150th anniversary of Goethe's death), when — incredibly — it had for reasons of propriety to be retitled 'Goethe and Love', contains a rare discussion of one of Goethe's beautiful, most erotic and most approachable works, 'The Diary', a narrative poem still not to be found in many Goethe editions in Germany. It was first translated into English, in prose, in 1964 by David Luke in his Penguin *Goethe*, and then appeared in *Playboy* magazine, no less, in a free but by no means faithless version by John Frederick Nims (which by a happy coincidence is included in Middleton's *Selected Poems*).

Elizabeth Wilkinson's essay considers Goethe's poem in the context of an overall discussion of other erotic passages in his work, and shows how essential it is to set each within its own context and to understand the formal conventions within which each occurs, if puritan or prurient readings are to be avoided.

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Publishers Weekly
£8.95 272pp

HUTCHINSON

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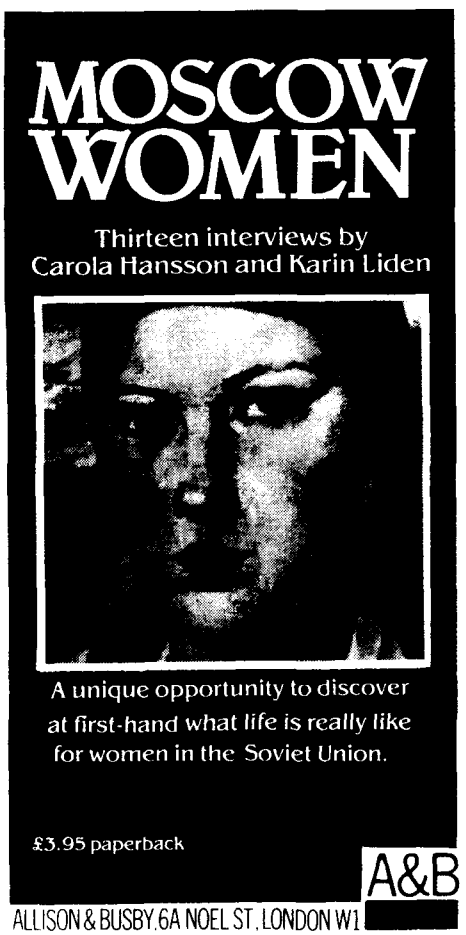
The spoken origin of this piece of great but lightly delivered and above all living scholarship is well preserved and it is a rare pleasure to read.

Among the other essays in the volume, which includes one by Hans Keller on why Goethe preferred the worst musical settings of his poems to the best, the most illuminating is Michael Hamburger's discussion of why it has been so difficult for the British to accommodate Goethe. He concludes that it is, partially, Goethe's very diversity that has put people off. He also writes with authority on the difficulty of translating him and argues persuasively against many prejudices (including T.S. Eliot's embarrassing piece of flannel), while querying others (like the extent of Goethe's alleged conservatism) and drawing attention to parallels and similarities between Goethe and Brecht (both were unusually wide-ranging, didactic and outside the conventional European Romantic/Symbolist tradition).

For the first volume of a large-scale edition of Goethe in English, which it announces itself to be, the bilingual **Selected Poems** leaves much to be desired. The introduction is too introspective and spends far too much time complaining garrulously about the difficulty of the task in hand, giving the impression that if only the right theoretical key could be found, all could be solved, probably by computer. The notes are unhelpful and the typography and layout ugly. However, it contains many successful translations — by Middleton and Hamburger, and by the very free but inspired and witty John F. Nims — of some of Goethe's most famous poems and many lesser known ones as well. □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FICTION
Richard Deveson

Flashy

The Passion of Jamesie Coyle
MICHAEL FOLEY *Fortnight Publications* £4.50
Harmonica's Bridegroom
PAUL BINDING *Aidan Ellis* £7.95
Bliss
JILL TWEEDIE *Heinemann* £8.95

Jamesie Coyle is no ordinary son. His Catholic Ulster carpenter father, Joe, admits to his cynical mates on the building site that Mary, his wee munchie, is up the skite, but insists that she's also a virgin; the child is born and, at an early age, routs Father Patten and the headmaster in a disputation on Catholic doctrine, being halted only by the conundrum whether a dying baby can be baptised by being thrown in a deep bucketless well or will go to Limbo. (His mother butts in. 'Leave go,' he tells her, 'I have things to do.')

After years of adolescent mooching around the house, Jamesie discovers his life's vocation at a country wedding reception (the sort of occasion — it's an unspecified unTroubled 1950s — when the local band plays compositions like *The Zambezi Special*, with a ten-minute drum solo): there's a crisis, the cake has been sliced up before the bridal couple has been photographed cutting it, Jamesie lays his hands on the reassembled pieces and lo! the cake is made whole. JC (for it is of course He) at once gathers together a gang of hustlers, boozers and snooker sharpers — Scranner McNab, Stooky Mullen, Brendie Carlin, Tarzan McGilloway *et al* — and starts travelling around Northern Ireland, healing the sick, raising from the dead, offending the authorities and pulling in the multitudes.

The Passion of Jamesie Coyle, an earlier version of which was serialised in the Belfast magazine *Fortnight*, is an unstoppable stream of Ulster vernacular, bad taste, bad jokes, good jokes, dirty jokes and deadly-accurate social bathos. The Five Thousand are well off for food (two Mister Softees, chips, hamburgers) but Jamesie is forced to conjure up a siteful of 'mobile toilets' out of thin air. He's chaste, but not averse to near-intimacies with a mature (Protestant) barmaid with a bra strap showing, who's gone through five husbands and wants to show him her operation scar. He doesn't ascend into heaven, and maybe he isn't destined for literary immortality either, but Michael Foley's novel must be the funniest book to have come out of Northern Ireland for a long time.

Harmonica's Bridegroom is a story of two brothers, Dan and James, locked in an almost incestuous relationship of love, rivalry, domination and submission. Their father lives in North Oxfordshire reclusion and writes crackpot works of blue-eyed Nordicist Vitalism; revelations of his Fascist sympathies, and the vast psychic predicament he represents for his sons, are one of the nuclei around which the novel turns.

The brothers are also linked through Kevin, a young man whom James has befriended and whom Dan later (and independently) picks up as a lover on the streets of Madrid. Through Kevin the differences between the brothers again find expression; Dan's success, balance and playing-safe (an academic career spent studying speech disorders) and James's failure, mental breakdown and artistic ecstasy (he plays Bluegrass music on the harmonica). Through Kevin, too, come betrayals and the destructive irruption of the past into the present.

This is an inadequate synopsis of a novel whose many parts are put together with subtlety and scrupulousness. But the thematic intensity isn't enough to make the book quite come off.

For one thing, Paul Binding has a positively Victorian way with dialogue: 'But I don't want you to think that it isn't for yourself that I care for you. Because it is; it *is*!' 'Don't be afraid, Kevin. Don't be afraid, Paseo harmonica-player!' (The gushing exclamation marks are typical.) Another difficulty is the complicated use of flashbacks and flashbacks within flashbacks. While this is presumably part of the point (viz. the relation between present and past), it also forces the reader to worry too much about exactly what it was that happened when: the sometimes rather precious emotional nuances of the central events aren't finally unveiled till late on, by which time the events have somewhat lost their impact.

ONE OF the more preposterous moments (there are several) in Jill Tweedie's **Bliss** occurs when Clare, the vapid daughter of an Earl and unhappy wife of a sadistic cold fish of a South American dictator, flies in to Heathrow on a state visit. Her husband, out to degrade and crush her, has had her drugged and then bundled, underpant-less, into the flimsiest silk, so that when she emerges at the top of the aeroplane steps the breeze (abetted by the slipstream from another plane that the diabolical Raul has cunningly arranged to taxi past) whips up her dress to flaunt her 'gold triangle' to waiting Royalty and the carnivorous lenses of the world's press. (Later — more symbolism — the woman journalist who's torn between her feminism and her desire for success, and is meant to be milking this story for a *Guardian*-ish article on the exploitation of women by the media, uses a photograph of the exposed Clare when getting up to sexual tricks with the layabout who's foisted a baby on the girl who . . .)

At the heart of the book, and provoking its best passages, is the dreadful fate of the Amazonian forests and their Indians — especially the women, who help Clare to emerge from pretty-girl passivity into some measure of independence. But Clare is more than a bit sentimental about these women and it isn't clear that Jill Tweedie isn't too, for all that she (properly) feels very strongly on the subject of world poverty. And the men . . . The future of the world is bleak indeed if the ghastly male specimens here are representative. Apart from a cuddly mad-professor botanist, they're a uniformly sex-mad, frivolous, drink-sodden, wife-beating lot. Sexism in reverse? Perish the thought; this is just good old-fashioned caricature. □

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Down and Out: Orwell's Paris and London Revisited

SANDY CRAIG and CHRIS SCHWARZ
Penguin (with Shelter) £4.95

Shelter recently ran a publicity campaign with the slogan, 'You don't have to be a down and out to be out and down'. It showed a 'nice' family sitting on a park bench with their suitcases. The campaign was roundly criticised for perpetuating negative images of the homeless. Sandy Craig and Chris Schwarz are guilty of the same offence, despite their protestations of innocence. The last sentence of the book asserts that the homeless 'are ordinary people' but the rest of it is demonstrably espousing the opposite case.

The idea was to retrace Orwell's steps, 50 years after he wrote *Down and Out in London and Paris*, with, it being the Eighties, a photographer. The text is interspersed with extracts from Orwell's book, rather insultingly in a smaller typeface, and the photographs have been confined to a section at the back.

As with Orwell, the authors' travels are in the nature of an anthropological foray into a sub-culture which they find mildly distasteful. The purpose is unclear. Orwell could be excused as having publicised a world which his peers had largely ignored. But in these days of colour magazines and Pilger documentaries, Craig's and Schwarz's effort is voyeuristic, even mildly pornographic, rather than didactic.

To focus on the men in Salvation Army hostels, both British and French, the Scottish professional bums living in Paris or the fights in the Halles between punks and rockers is hardly an effort to present the homeless as 'ordinary'. All the stereotypes are there: needles sticking out of tattooed arms, prostitutes doing blow jobs in Park Lane, winos lying in gutters and the early morning queue for catering jobs.

The only possible justification is as a political tract and, at least, the text does cover, albeit scantily, most of the issues around homelessness. But it is essentially a catalogue of despair. Where is the resistance movement in this war against poverty? The authors offer us no fighters, no campaigners, no policies, no hope.

The most revealing moment is when Craig happens on a tramp in London who has just been attacked. As the crowd waits for the ambulance, he asks a woman what happened, explaining he is a journalist interested in homelessness. '"I suppose it was just too good to be true", she answers venomously', and scurries off, leaving him none the wiser.

Christian Wolmar

Selected Essays

JOHN BAYLEY *Cambridge* £19.50 & £7.95

This selection from the voluminous literary journalism of John Bayley reflects a surprisingly narrow range of his enthusiasms: except for pieces on Whitman, Canetti, Milosz and Popa, the volume is devoted to modern English and American poetry and to Russian literature. Unsurprisingly, enthusiasm provides its pervading characteristic. Fortunately, this rarely takes the form of gush, usually comprising a mixture of defence and advocacy. Bayley is aware, for instance, that the great Russian poets, especially his beloved Pushkin, can seem decidedly ungreat in English. Consequently, and quite reasonably, when writing about translations of Akhmatova, Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva (as well as Pushkin), he dwells on the qualities lost in the chasm between languages. The pieces on post-war American poetry tend to champion Bayley's favourites, Berryman and Lowell — 'the great contemporary narrators, compulsive tellers of stories about the self' — against those (Stevens, Ashbery, Ammons) whose 'ghost or shadow poetry' illustrates Harold Bloom's proposition that 'the meaning of a poem is another poem'. On the subject of English poetry, interestingly, Bayley appears less inclined to argue causes: his appreciations of the early Auden, Betjeman and Larkin are among the best things on show.

Bayley's most extensive feat of advocacy is on behalf of his own traditional view of literature. Indeed, this entire selection constitutes an implicit, and intermittently explicit, antithesis to modern critical theory, for which Bayley has little regard. He loves literature; modern theory puts literature in its place. He reveres authorial genius; it tends to downgrade, and sometimes ignores, the author's role. He rejoices in literature's representation of 'physical realities'; it has replaced them 'with the abstract play of language'. The kind of empiricism practised by Bayley does, of course, have its weaknesses, as critical theorists invariably point out. But it can — and here often does — offer passion and sensitive responses: attributes which Bayley considers absent from the 'bloodlessly mechanistic' procedures of structuralism and the like.

David Montrose

Another Heart and Other Pulses

MICHAEL FOOT *Collins* £8.95

Oh God, why did I agree to review this book?
Will I be forgiven if I give my fee to END?
'Don't be hard on old Footy,'
I hear readers plead, or mutter.
'Michael is such a *kind* man,'
Say those who know him.
The Left is for the downtrodden, the losers.

Labour's support for the Falklands task force
Upheld the Party's
National and International Traditions.
Look, dear God.
I didn't say it.
I've made not a single comment on it here:
Passed no judgment,
Made no wisecracks.
His words — why should I be accused of condemnation?

Michael Foot makes it a principle
To review no book he cannot praise.
We should be generous to those who write.
If we do not like what they compose
Then live and let live.

No review, therefore, dear literary editor,
On his principles.
You might object that Foot's book
Could not be worse than his election campaign.
But it is.
Even worse.
To remain silent about such politics
Is to live and let die.

Anthony Barnett

The Green Movement in West Germany

ELIM PAPADAKIS *Croom Helm* £15.95

The mould of West German politics has also been broken: not by a centre party trying to restore a failed consensus, but by the radical environmentalist Greens. Since British political scientists have been obsessed by domestic developments, it is good to have Papadakis' informative study.

As it was the rapid expansion of nuclear energy in the 1970s which most of all launched the German Greens, it is arguable that Britain has militant miners as a substitute for such a movement. The much slower development of nuclear power in the UK meant that a protest movement began to grow only in the late Seventies, when it was quickly swamped by a reborn CND, which in turn coincided with Labour's radicalisation after its '79 defeat. In West Germany, by contrast, the cruise/Pershing II issue helped turn an ecology movement into a Green Party able to provide effective electoral competition for the centrist Social-Liberal coalition parties.

Papadakis shows how the Greens combined the rural, conservative protest against things nuclear with the opposition of the alienated, educated young. It would be good to know if the rural ingredient is essential: is this why there are no British Greens? Or did the Scottish Nationalists diffuse the potential in the one part of Britain where it existed? Nevertheless, the young activists are there in the peace movement, and it is far from clear that Labour can win the votes, let alone participation, of the young generally. Would the Left benefit from the West German system of proportional representation, allowing alternative radical parties, rather than the Single Transferable Vote designed to help a medium-sized centre party?

Papadakis' outlines of the alternative local projects, the attitudes of young people, the responses of the major parties — and the political/tactical divisions of the Greens themselves — are full and stimulate these comparative questions.

Martin Shaw

Ecology 2000

ed. SIR EDMUND HILLARY with TOM BURKE (consultant)
Michael Joseph £10.95

Ecology 2000, which looks like a coffee-table book, is of some use to serious readers. Its 13 chapters, by eight authors, summarise ecological knowledge on topics including air and water pollution, desert spread and urban decay. The summaries are inevitably partial; there's not much on resources depletion or on alternative technology; the style is anonymously uniform; a list of sources, or at least a select bibliography, should have been provided. For all that, only those familiar with the issues from more scholarly works can dismiss the book.

Even a sympathetic reader is, however, likely to be dismayed by its format. Photographs of the poor and starving jostle with arty shots of sunlight on the sea, with traffic queues in LA, with the inevitable mushroom cloud — and the inevitable giant panda. This trivialised visual world, where juxtaposition has usurped the place of analysis, reflects the book's lack of political direction and, in particular, its failure to establish, among the symptoms of crisis, an order of priorities which would place the needs of people unequivocally in first place. Nor is there any indication that the all-embracing global economy is, very largely, a capitalist economy: the term 'capitalism' occurs nowhere. As for the shortage of money which prevents this or that urgent project from being carried out, this is sometimes made to seem as 'natural' as a shortage of rain or sun.

When blame is laid on the rich nations, the absence of structural analysis results in all guilt being attributed to the individual, who dumps acid rain in Swedish lakes when she switches on the light or takes food from a starving child when he eats a hamburger. Tom Burke is right to argue that 'a legitimate politics of ecology must engender a sense of personal responsibility', but it must also engender a critical awareness of where wealth and power lie.

M.H. Ryle

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OPERA
Andrew Clements

Risk taking

Nigel Robson as Dov, Omar Ebrahim as Mel and chairs as labyrinth in *Knot Garden*

La Calisto; The Knot Garden
Wilde Theatre, Bracknell; Royal Court from June 5

Opera Factory London's debut production of Birstwistle's *Punch and Judy* was unquestionably the operatic highlight of 1982. It was everything one always expects of contemporary opera and so rarely gets — a pungent, incisive staging, imaginatively conceived and executed. *Punch* was coupled in a short season at the Drill Hall with *The Beggar's Opera* reworked as a rock musical but substantially less convincing on all levels and contriving to raise many critical hackles. In its way, however, the failure was as revealing as the success of the Birtwistle, demonstrating that here was an opera company and a director, David Freeman, willing to live dangerously, to experiment; above all underlining a desire to put dramatic effectiveness before musical exactitude.

The first Opera Factory season was launched under the paternalistic eye of English National Opera, though not funded by it. Now, however, the London Sinfonietta has added its considerable prestige to the project, begetting Opera Factory London Sinfonietta, an awkward handle for a company whose approach is direct and economical. The inaugural season of OFLS pairs Cavalli's *La Calisto* with Tippett's *Knot Garden*. The stagings opened last week at the impressive new Wilde Theatre in Bracknell and take over the Royal Court in London for two weeks of performances from Tuesday next.

Calisto was a hit at Glyndebourne in the early 1970s in a realisation by Raymond Leppard (the work survives only in skeletal form) that unashamedly over-egged the orchestration, tinkered with the plot and incorporated arias from other operas to produce an appropriate vehicle for Janet Baker in the title role. For Opera Factory Paul Daniel has reconstructed a very pure, stripped-down edition of the score which drops all the additions, restores much of the recitative cut at Glyndebourne and uses only a small band of authentic period instruments. The scabrous outlines, wittier, more cynical text and a production that does not miss a trick turn it into an enormously entertaining evening.

To begin with, though, the production tricks threatened to outstay their welcome. The visual jokes seemed overplayed and just a little adolescent, almost a parody of a modern-dress production of a baroque opera, the kind of thing that is meat and drink to *Daily Telegraph* leader writers: Jove as cigar-puffing tycoon; Mercury a roller-skating *mafioso*; Nature, Destiny and Eternity as a trio of beauty queens; Pan and his cronies itinerant rugby players; a fountain replaced by a bottle of Coke. Combined with singing that was sometimes slapdash and never very stylish, it suggested an end-of-term romp which added little to the opera. But, as the evening wore on, the action gained in conviction and pace; the singing, too, improved markedly and the whole thing began to cohere into a lively and thoughtful piece of theatre that did convey the spirit of the original in contemporary and genuinely theatrical terms.

The Knot Garden also still lies in the shadow of a famous production. Peter Hall's première staging, first seen at Covent Garden in 1971, was swiftly transferred to record and, though the Royal Opera has been perversely unwilling to revive what was one of its most successful recent commissions, the style and approach of that production are well documented on the discs. It remains possibly the most attractive of Tippett's operas, lacking the complexity and depth of *The Midsummer Marriage* and the dramatic surety of *King Priam* but defining a whole area of expression and experience that preoccupied his music in the 1970s. There is no avoiding its unevenness — the third act does not provide any kind of convincing or logical resolution — but it contains some of its composer's most magical inspirations.

Much of that magic survives Opera Factory's presentation, but they add to the work a hard, expressive core that is quite new. The original cast suggested the sophisticated games of a middle-class house party, hermetically sealed from the real world for all their preoccupations with sexual roles and political freedom. Opera Factory, enhancing the work's claustrophobia with its plain, white-walled box set, grounds those fears and fantasies in reality. Dov is no longer the sentimental gay musician, crossed in love, but a more desperate, unbalanced individual whose failure to resolve his problems strikes the work's single, tragic note; Flora is transformed from the two-dimensional cipher moving from innocence to experience into a genuinely disturbed and inarticulate young woman.

That psychological deepening is achieved at some cost to the surface consistency of the opera. It may be that *The Ice Break* has made us retrospectively sensitive to some of the infelicities which can be found in any Tippett libretto; there was nevertheless a veneer of chic urbanity in the Hall production that carried the ear over the worst solecisms, whereas here they are left to fend for themselves. The character of Mangus, too, suffers; he is left on the edge of things, impotent and ridiculous, and his direction of the *Tempest* charade in the third act becomes monstrously embarrassing.

Freeman has chosen to play the opera without intervals; it lasts only 90 minutes and the cast remains on stage throughout. The lack of elaborate stage machinery (for both the rose garden of the first act and the nightmare labyrinth of the second this production makes do with an array of stacking tubular chairs) enhances the rawness, though some of Tippett's stage directions inevitably go by the board. The opera's set pieces are still clearly delineated, however: the first act pivots about Denise's dramatic tortured aria, the second builds up to Dov's 'pop song', the third (less decisively) to Thea's 'I am no more afraid'. That the opera fails to balance the impact of Denise's first appearance with an adequate healing of her mental and physical disfigurement is something the most acute production could not disguise, though here perhaps the character is not as chillingly presented as it was by Josephine Barstow at the première.

Elsewhere, however, the casting is very intelligent. Nigel Robson's Dov and Omar Ebrahim's Mel make a sharply contrasting

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couple; though Tippett specifies a black singer for Mel, the specific references in the libretto are not important and Ebrahim gives the character far more depth and interest than one hears on the records. Robson's touchingly funny assumption is a nice counterpart to his broadly hilarious Pan in *Calisto*; all seven singers in *Knot Garden* reappear in *Calisto* with much doubling of roles. There is Janis Kelly's Calisto and fascinatingly unbalanced Flora, Marie Angel's brassy Juno and aggressive Denise, Christine Botes's Diana and predatory Thea. The most stylish singing, though, comes from Christopher Robson, a counter-tenor Endymion in *Calisto* combining good vocal production with fine acting.

Paul Daniel directs the ensemble in *Calisto*, while the Sinfonietta conducted by Howard Williams uses a new chamber orchestration of *The Knot Garden* prepared for this production by Meirion Bowen. It is a convincing surrogate for the full orchestral score, perhaps lacking some weight of string tone at one or two moments but otherwise emerging lithe and muscular, and balancing the generally lightweight voices equitably. Altogether it is a most auspicious start to the collaboration of orchestra and opera company; with luck it could become the permanent third force in British opera that is so badly needed. □

DANCE
Stephanie Jordan

Poised

London Contemporary Dance Theatre
Sadler's Wells

Implicit in the title of Siobhan Davies's latest piece for LCDT, **New Galileo**, is that there was an era when science and art were close, the creative impulse similar in both. The opening lone dancer, Jonathan Lunn, must be the visionary scientist. He generates a quiet charisma, casting, within a narrow corridor of light beamed from overhead, shapes and forms, occasionally reaching towards the darkness on either side, but always poised, concentrated in his enquiry. Sometimes we see him from behind standing quietly as if in thought, a fist held across his back.

Now the piece expands and the possibilities of the title with it: one, two and then an octet of dancers absorbing Lunn, like him dressed in gaily coloured leotards and vests, and soon spreading like constellations from one side of the illuminated area to the other. Very quickly, Davies has established that one man is not the centre of this piece (and thus, Galileo's earth no longer the centre of a Ptolemaic universe).

The Renaissance allusion goes further, with the familiar fusion found in sculpture of geometrical forms and architectural precision offset by a curved and asymmetrical application of human figures. In *Galileo*, shapes, patterns and territories are marked firmly. The light-beams themselves provide the ultimate control, the gap between them increasing surreptitiously throughout the piece so that they delineate rectangular spaces of changing size and shape, an assertive framework to the spatial configurations of the dancers. But the choreography spills over with information, events succeed each other and contrast nervously, the density dangerous. Dancers melt, curve and swing as antidote to their sculptural formality. A final rush in a row towards the audience, arms about each other and then, in silence, the dancers assemble in couples at the back, familiar images slowly rippling down the line.

Davies is now sufficiently sure-handed to cope with this density and to allow her main statement to be one of confidence achieved through zestful and ambitious dancing. In this respect, the piece is the culmination and resolution of several strands in Davies's work. Not so long ago, attack, angularity and linear precision were a metaphor for ungiving relationships and lack of accord, as if Davies were not entirely happy away from the soft, musing lyricism with which audiences so often associated her. Now, that strength and speed are presented positively, as an assertion of trust between dancers — there are even glimpses of an interest in classical placement and images, supported *attitudes* poised on the toes, crystalline fifth positions.

New Galileo is also Davies's surest integration yet of dance, design and music. The lighting devised by David Buckland and Peter Mumford is entirely effective. Three pictures on the backcloth show Lunn in a striking motif from the dance, gazing out with palms of the hands raised, then a bronze planet and then, more enigmatically, an abstraction of birds in flight: once again, solid symmetry and fanciful motion. John Adams's piano score *Phrygian Gates*, with its reiterated chordal figurations, broadly supports Davies's symbiotic brilliance, contemplation and imagination.

The unifying factor in Robert Cohan's tripartite **Agora** is less obvious. As programme note, a poem by Ruth Padel perceives the assembly or market place of the title as the moment in history when humanity strayed in from the wild, as it were, became corporate, had all the rules to invent and was free to fashion its own world. Three quotations, two from Heraclitus, heading the sections, explore utterance with meaning beyond words: the Delphic oracle, the Sibyl, singing Antigone, as if song (and dance) were cathartic where the vehicle of words is inadequate. This suggests Cohan's attempt to draw meaning from the three contrasting sections as demonstrations of three sides of human experience: the disciplined/intellectual, the suffering of the world and the celebratory.

The first section *Intimations*, cast in cool, grey trousers and shirts and set to Bach's *Chaconne in D minor*, intimates that discipline is a serious matter, four soloists stopping and starting, overlapping, fragmenting and freezing their phrases and gradually melting into unison. It is a stylistic blur, Cohan's customary references to Graham vocabulary springing out as highly emotional symbols that lead nowhere. But some of the movement is unexpected from this choreographer. To a sound collage by Barrington Pheloung, *Chasm* might be an episode from a savage primaeval war: eight wild, tattered creatures in the half-dark grappling with three giant wooden pole props — weapons, trees or crucifixes. The final *Hymn* is the celebration by the company as couples in joyous, exuberant discipline, the tatters now exchanged for the shirts and trousers of the first section, but in a violent range of brilliant colours. Yet the response to the buoyant rhythms of Bach's Sixth *Brandenburg Concerto* is heavy handed. *Intimations*, the interweaving of material and people, is the most stimulating statement in the piece and, from this choreographer, the most exploratory for some time.

Preceding *Agora* was Davies's **Carnival** to Saint-Saens, given a more burlesque reading than by Second Stride for whom it was created. It is still a model of wit and invention, loved by children of every age group. □

Among this week's contributors:

JONATHAN MIRSKY is the *Observer*'s China correspondent

DAVID GILMOUR'S *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* has recently been updated and published by Sphere in paperback.

NICHOLAS MURRAY is a member of Bermondsey Labour Party.

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Irregular lines

WHEN OUR CIVILISATION finally bites the nuclear dust and our collective memory is relieved of its burden, the surviving micro-tapes, zinc-encased, may well include **Six Centuries of Verse** (C4), the best of our island's poetical heritage. Unlucky then that two of the first poems in recognisable English should have been altered, in three different places, by the actor employed to pass them on to posterity. The Thomas Wyatt poem that begins 'They flee from me that sometime did me seek / With naked foot, stalking in my chamber' goes on,

> I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
> That now are wild, and do not once remember
> That sometime they put themselves in danger
> To take bread at my hand . . .

Except that there is no 'once' before remember. Mr Nicholas Gecks has taken it upon himself to rid Wyatt's line of the very thing which distinguishes it. Why didn't he stick to 'have' before 'put'? And wouldn't 'take *some* bread at my *right* hand' have sounded better to his classically trained ear? Don't they have anyone on the book in TV?

Correction is not new to Wyatt. His irregular lines were criticised after his death when the iambic pentameter finally stamped itself on the remains of the old alliterative line with its well marked pause separating two distinct rhythmical units. The editor of *Tottel's Songs and Sonettes* (1557), which first introduced

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Wyatt's poems to a general public, attempted to eliminate what he felt were metrical faults in them, the very qualities which we prize in Wyatt today: 'an unlyrical note' as the programme's compiler Anthony Thwaite has it, 'with an extraordinarily modern ring'.

Further improvements by Geck were offered to the little known poet Chidiock Tichbourne, whose 'My prime of youth is but a frost of cares', the opening of the heartbreaking poem written on the eve of his execution, has its elegant deployment of vowel sounds shot away by Geck's substitution of the clichéd 'My prime of life', which Tichbourne never reached, poor chap. Where Tichbourne wrote 'The glass is full', referring to the lower half of an hour-glass and perhaps to 'This bitter cup', Gecks has gone for '*My* glass is full', reducing it to a tankard. All down on microtape!

The trouble is that actors are trained to *interpret* and *perform* a text, the last thing you want for poetry. They stand there pretending they are snatching the phrases out of the atmosphere, like Hamlet, as if they had just thought of them themselves and can therefore make free with the wording. They get overexcited and they get it wrong. The effect is comic, until the actor's sub-editing instincts get out of control, as here.

An extreme example of the 'performance' or 'interpretive' style was given by Ian Richardson, whose self-induced fervour peaked about two-thirds of the way through Walter Raleigh's 'The Lie', leaving him stranded in a sort of rose garden. He went at the thing like a matador, with immense feeling, much panting and many impassioned gestures at the flowers as he walked round and round a hedged fountain with his collar turned up. When highly personal poems are dramatised to this extent, the result cannot but be *self*-dramatisation. That turned up collar was the essence of narcissism, a very obnoxious prospect. Let's hope that old 'Pear-shake' (as my nephew excusably calls him) fares better next week.

One of the best drama-documentaries to appear recently was Elaine Morgan's **Journey into the Shadows** (BBC-2), a section from the hard life of the painter Gwen John. This was a collaboration of four women: author, subject, director Anna Benson Gyles and actor Anna Massey. The story is ideal for demonstrating the difficulties encountered by women who insist on the right to their own destiny. Batting for the men we have the egocentric and overrated brother Augustus, the patriarchal old stud Rodin and the insensitive, pushy art-dealer Quinn. 'He knows nothing about painting,' says Gwen of this busy appreciator of her work. 'He bores me.' While for the women we have a bevvy of graceful, put-upon ladies, mostly pregnant by Augustus: Ida, his wife; Dorelia, his mistress; Clara, his concubine-cum-nanny; and Gwen his sister who laid her (Freudian?) passion at the feet of his namesake, Rodin, 60, who squeezed her into a tiny corner of his busy international life: Friday mornings.

'My dear girl,' he says, proffering apologetic primroses as she inclines bedwards. 'I can't stay. I only came to see how you were. To talk. For a while.' A glance at her drawings and he makes to go. 'Oh not already,' says Gwen. 'If we don't make love I'm afraid there'll be nothing left. I know I'm too thin. I will eat more, but the concierge . . .' He has to go, the bastard, but Gwen soldiers on, never quite starving, never eating lunch, always working, never exhibiting. 'I had such pleasure with you today,' she writes to Rodin. 'Your thoughts are so far beyond me in wisdom and grandeur, I almost feel quite stupid. I am going to draw my little cat.' So that a picture of infinite pathos and docility emerges, one that was far from the truth.

When her boorish brother arrives in Paris, out of his depth among various people's offspring following his wife's death, we are astonished to hear him ask Gwen to take them off his hands: 'I can't work in that racket.' Gwen, to our relief, shows him the big 'No' and us a glimpse of the steel beneath her pallor. Gwen was shy and very modest — 'people say it is ugly and I am sure they are right' — but, as Anna Massey has pointed out, shyness is a selfish, attention-getting thing. 'She became a recluse and yet she was in her way assertive. She walked in a speedily assertive way. You can see from her photo that she has a wonderful upright stance. She was indomitably *there*.' As indeed is Anna Massey in everything she does. Born the year Gwen died and bearing a close physical resemblance, it seems she may actually *be* Gwen John by now. But it has to be said that even she could not quite maintain the spell of such a very *interior* life for one and a half hours. □

THEATRE
Susan Todd

Opening eyes

Never in My Lifetime
SHIRLEY GEE *Soho Poly*
Serjeant Musgrave's Dance
JOHN ARDEN *Old Vic*
Golden Boy
CLIFFORD ODETS *Lyttelton*

Shirley Gee has won many laurels in radio and it's perhaps that solid craft-training which has given her such confidence and authority in creating fast-moving, free-flowing and original methods of shaping dramatic narrative. In **Never in My Lifetime** she has found a way of developing the story which proposes a means of perceiving the tragic experience she so fearlessly addresses. The play takes as starting-point a specific violent event in contemporary Belfast. It examines the event from a multiplicity of viewpoints, in time and of character, until a rich portrait is assembled — factual, personal, imaginative, historical. The shape of the play becomes itself the process through which we can begin to understand the political importance of the event.

The soldier's wife (Samantha Bond) and the Irish mother (Kate Binchy) are in possession of knowledge of unrevealed violence involving their kin. Their monologues, never merely pleasing direct address, represent their unique struggles to grasp the full personal meaning of that violence. Two teenage girls, one (Kate Lock) sunny and straightforward, the other (Gaylie Runciman) deeply involved with Ireland's history and the IRA, cross the paths of two British soldiers. Through this quartet, with many passages of gripping suspense and tightening lines of emotional entanglement, the full story is unfolded; it 'catches up' with and more fully illumines the experience behind the narratives of the two women, each of whom is linked to a member of the fated quartet.

The play suggests not an end through the act of violence but the pain of continuing consequence to be endured. Shirley Gee avoids abstraction by working through a language brilliant with incandescent detail. She can forge an image to touch the dullest political nerve and make a phrase to shift the hardest heart. She has created a play whose effect approaches the depth of understanding a reader gains from a novel without losing dramatic excitement. Samantha Bond and Kate Binchy don't flinch from the suffering contained in their characters' experiences and so take us entirely with them. Kate Lock and Gaylie Runciman together cover a formidable range of feeling, from schoolgirl gags to emotional and political commitment and loss. Susan Hogg directs with keen feeling for the mercurial flow of this gripping play.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance also explores different perceptions of a 'colonial' war, and the tension between terror of and desperate need for some winged, apocalyptic change. *Musgrave* was one of the first exhilarating, scaring, poetic and fiercely articulate intimations that something was terribly wrong in post-war Britain. The play declared war on an affluence complacently growing, in those times, at the expense of soldiers' blood shed elsewhere. The terrifying ghosts in the play are not only those of the unjustly dead but also the tormented visions of some of the living. Musgrave's apparently pacifist obsession is in fact with the military logic of reprisal for offence against divine law and it makes him cruel. Those for whom he yearns to make his word dance are full of murderous aggression in defence of jobs in a mining town, and the forces of church and state are ready to divert radical purposes to their own ends. Only sane Mrs Hitchcock and less balanced Annie share unspoken knowledge that there is no 'logic' to guide us.

This production evokes frustration at rich material being under-discovered and underworked. A tremendous weight of undisputed acting skill is laid at the play's service but the production fails to unite the performers sufficiently knowingly behind the play's possibilities and its powerful, gathering momentum. Important climaxes in the action are muted instead of releasing the feelings of fearful expectation with which the play is fraught. Some performances lack the soul boldly to animate individual attitudes of greed or fear, aggression or slippery equivocation, and tend toward the mechanical cliché instead of the fresh-minted cartoon. Albert Finney as Musgrave also directs and, though he is finely sensitive to the demands of the text, he seems to be holding back from the grim and tragic tension in Musgrave's character, the tension between pacific visionary and man of blood. Perhaps the lack of emotional substance here leads to a forcing of emotion elsewhere, in the three men who follow Musgrave. Eileen Atkins (Mrs Hitchcock) and Cathryn Harrison (Annie) seem closest to the play's core — both very real and very strange.

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The play's eloquence was in the end muffled. What horror at the implications of Nicosia's 'murder mile' inspired in John Arden could, with the right emphasis, have been transposed to clarify confusion of thought and feeling about Ireland as well as Cyprus, the miners' strike as well as industrial history, and the life of this magnificent play would then have been appropriately renewed.

Clifford Odets wrote this full-blown New York second-generation immigrant melodrama in 1937, when, happily, it made a lot of money for America's left-wing theatre company, The Group. Presumably that made Odets himself feel a lot better about leaving poor theatre to be rich in Hollywood. **Golden Boy** sets up a series of breathtakingly crude oppositions between fame and fortune or art and poverty in its tale of a lad who gives up the violin he's so talented with to be a professional fighter. The boy's every move, motive, gesture and mood is studied by those around him with staggering concentration. He's a mass of contradictions — can knock a chap dead in the ring one minute and weep over his murdered softer self the next. It's hard to take seriously something which covers itself quite so many ways and, rather than creating a portrait of confusion, becomes a confused play, which itself participates in the moral corruption it appears so to decry.

The message that, I fear, comes through is that the fossilised values of art and humanity can be dumped along with dear old Italian Papa, so we, along with the boy and probably Odets too, can fling guilt to the winds and go all out for total success, which in its mythic incarnation wipes away all debts. Death in a fast car crash equally neatly sidesteps the real issue — trying to live in the world as a decent human being. The production is acted, directed and mounted with the most careful, living, affectionate detail imaginable. It looks like a series of sumptuous film sets and the worlds of boxing, sport promotion, homely Italian family life are set as a feast before us. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Human race

The Terry Fox Story (PG)
Classics, Tottenham Court Road and Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington
The Naked Face (18)
Odeon, Leicester Square

Inevitably one is reminded of the recent *Champions*, in which John Hurt played to the last fence an angry, courageous and real-life steeplechase jockey who conquered cancer to come back and win the 1981 Grand National.

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Theatre

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SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines) CC group sales 01-930 6123. Gilbert & Sullivan Season. '**HMS Pinafore**' 4, 6 June. '**The Gondoliers**' 5, 7 June. Evngs 7.30.

Museums

THE LONDON TOY AND MODEL MUSEUM houses Europe's finest collection of toy and model trains, boats, cars, planes, dolls, bears etc. Cafe, shop and working garden railways. Suitable for all the family. Tues-Sat 10-5.30. Sun. 11-5.00. 21-23 Craven Hill, W2. Tel. 01 262 9450. Tubes: Paddington, Lancaster Gate. Admission charge.

Poetry

POETRY WRITING Weekend Course in beautiful West Dorset Location. 22-24 June. Cost £30. For details write: Word and Action, 23 Beaucroft Lane, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset.

Galleries

PENTONVILLE GALLERY, 47 Lambs Conduit Street, London WC1. 01-242 8629. '**Selected Works 1970-1984**' Photo works/collages by Rasheed Araeen. Tues-Fri 11am-2pm Sats 11am 2pm, GLC funded, financially assisted by GLAA.

HISTORY WORKSHOP CENTRE FOR SOCIAL HISTORY

19th Century Liberalism — an international perspective
Fri eve 8 June-Sun 10 June
Somerville College, Oxford

Fri eve: **Cora Caplan**, Tom Paine; **Al Young**, The American Revolution. **Followed by party.**
Sat: **Eric Hobsbawm**, Democracy; **Ursula Vogel**, Property; **Alan Knight**, Mexico, **Siep Sturman**, Dutch liberalism; **David Blackborn**, Imperial Germany.
Sun: **Barbara Taylor**, Feminism; **Pierre Rosanvallon**, Guizot; **Claude Lefort**, De Tocqueville; **Raphael Samuel**, Liberalism and socialism; **Chantal Mouffe**, Liberalism today and yesterday; **Round Table**, Liberalism and the State.

Tickets £8 waged, £4 unwaged from HWCSH 'Liberalism' Conference, Ruskin College, Oxford.

Festivals

JOBS FOR A CHANGE FESTIVAL

The Festival will celebrate alternatives to the dole which seek to meet needs and make jobs. Over 200 groups will demonstrate their alternatives in a major exhibition organised by the GLC's Industry and Employment Committee.

THE SMITHS, – MISTY IN ROOTS – MARI WILSON WITH THE WILSATIONS – BARIO LATINO – HI-JINKS – ABACUSH – EKOME – HANK WANGFORD – BILLY BRAGG – RED SKINS – ROY SHIRLEY

THEATRE puppets, street theatre and buskers
RIVER TRIPS to show the peoples plans for Docklands
WINE from a French Co-operative
CHILDREN'S games, painting, clowns, theatre, inflatables, creche and the 'Obstacles to Jobs' race
CONCERTS in the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room with Ivor Cutler, Vocem & Grand Union
CABARET tent
FILMS & videos about employment at the National Film Theatre
DEBATES and speakers.

Keep GLC Working for London

LATE NIGHT SPECTACULAR LASER SHOW

ALL FREE – 11am – 11pm

SOUTH BANK, COUNTY HALL, JUBILEE GARDENS

SUNDAY JUNE 10th

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Ralph Thomas's **The Terry Fox Story** similarly tells a 'true' tale where sport and a man's fight against cancer are interwoven themes; there is a brief re-run of the humiliating horrors of chemotherapy, of which temporary baldness is not the least; and both films manage to incorporate beautiful, supportive girlfriends, a trainer or manager who cracks the whip when necessary, a crucial spur or fillip through the shaming stoicism of equally stricken kids.

But there the more banal (because calculatedly box-office) likeness largely ends. The big difference is that Bob Champion — whose guts are in no way under question — did what he did for himself; and for Life, if you will. Young Terry Fox, an athletic 18-year-old from near Vancouver, had a leg amputated in 1977 after discovery of a malignant tumour and went on to overcome his disability to the extent of embarking, hop-skipping painfully on a prosthetic limb, on a 5,150-mile cross-Canada 'Marathon of Hope': in the end, he raised $24m. for cancer research.

In fact, as Thomas's movie shows, the agonised, coughing Fox had to be hospitalised for lung carcinoma with 1,679 miles to go. He died in June 1981 having received countless awards. A postage stamp honoured him; heads of state mourned him; a mountain has been named after him. So much is history — and one of the troubles with history is that it often fails to make a particularly good story. There is only so much picturesque mileage, after all, to be got from what forms the bulk of this film: that one-man marathon. What helps to lift matters out of the 'heroic' ruck is, first and foremost, that Fox is very well played by a genuine amputee, Eric Fryer, who had never acted before. When blood runs down that artificial leg, it at least feels for real. Then Edward Hume's script lets in persuasive doses not merely of pettishness, rage (Michael Zelniker, excellent as Doug, Fox's dormobile-van driver, sulks bitterly for a spell under Fox's abuse), but — more interestingly — of ambiguities of motive and relationships. The pretty girlfriend (Rosalind Chao), teacher of the mentally retarded, has the human gall to accuse the crippled marathon-man of selfishness when he asks her to accompany him.

And, perhaps best of all, there is the sense of things getting cruelly out of hand, becoming a vicious circus even, as Robert Duvall turns up as Bill Vigars, publicist for the Toronto branch of the Cancer Society. He admits to having flogged encyclopaedias, peanuts and whatever in the past: in the film's present this smiling-anxious Vigars nearly flogs Terry to death with his demands. More of this and there might have been something to remember, not mildly to applaud for its worthiness.

Written and directed by Bryan Forbes from a Sidney Sheldon thriller, **The Naked Face** amusingly casts Roger Moore as a wealthy, widowered Chicago psychiatrist who twigs, after the murders of a patient and his secretary, that someone is out to get him and his coded case-histories. A mysterious woman client (Anne Archer), Rod Steiger and Elliott Gould as ambivalent cops, super Art Carney as a clock-collecting, short-lived private eye Moore hires, help sustain a preposterous, corkscrewing entertainment, with our out-of-character shrink filthily beaten up at disclosure-time. 'Everything about the goddam case is unlikely,' mutters Gould somewhere: no comment. □

FIRST PERSON

Bill Greenwell

Station of the cross

I HAVE a love/hate relationship with Reading Station, where, over the years, I have frequently been set down and let down. Or where, as Frank Richards says of Bunter, I have been landed, stranded, diddled, dished and done.

Yes, I remember Reading Station. Like to have seen what Edward Thomas would have made of *that* one.

Still, the place did once offer me a peculiar insight into the mean heart of the over-7s. I was somewhere between a train that had just missed me and its successor, still idling in, or sidling out of, a distant siding. I was repairing my temper in the buffet and burning my fingers on some thin plastic, looking longingly away from its faintly familiar liquid content. It was before The Age of the Train.

In those days there was a one-armed bandit by the buffet door (there is now one of those consoles where one may terminate tiny aliens with extreme prejudice and a toy laser, and which emits a faint, squirling sound). The one arm engaged belonged to a child only recently come of school age. It was a skilful little arm, plainly practised and a pastmaster of what was then a relatively recent innovation, the HOLD buttons. Nearby, an elderly gentleman tutted vigorously. He had heard of Modern Decadence and was watching it made manifest.

What happened was this: the child pulled three lemons into place and the lights flashed up HOLD HOLD HOLD. Silver winnings pumped from the machine as fast as his hand yanked the handle and pulled again. More money. HOLD HOLD HOLD again. Yank. Clinkety-clatter. HOLD HOLD HOLD.

The machine was malfunctioning, stuck on spewing out boodle. The kid couldn't lose. And the tut suddenly shut on the pursed lips of the disapproving gentleman. What now followed was swift and decisive. Our Mr Grundy rose and elbowed the tiny aside. With a frantic zest, the man filled his pockets with coins as, time after time, the bandit disgorged itself. I never saw how this little scene resolved itself because my train turned up after all, but the memory of it is enough to make one slop coffee when sitting again by that buffet door.

When I was there again recently, however, it was another menace that arrested my attention. It was that special brand of language, The Station Announcement, which had moved into something which I can only term dispronunciation. It was loud, insistent and played upon only two (nearly adjacent) notes of the musical scale. A flavour of it is all that I may responsibly give you:

. . . is the/
train for/
MoreTON-in-/
marshcalling at/
didcotoxFORD/
hand*bor*/
oughcombe fin/
stockCHARLburyas/
Cott-under-wyck /
woodshiptonkin y/
*ham*more*ton*-in-*marsh* the/
train now *stand*/
ing at plat . . .

It drove me from the buffet. But it was waiting for me on the platform. It sprang out from behind carriages parked on the rails. It dinned. It bit. It was like being a match repeatedly struck on a surface no longer sufficiently abrasive.

These reminiscences were prompted by other stationary sadisms which feature in the recently published *Notes from Overground**, by someone sheltering beneath the pseudonym 'Tiresias'. He is, unless he's fibbing, a classicist and former commuter from the Oxford area. Tiresias is the one what whopped two screwing snakes and underwent instant sex-change as punishment, turning back to mannishness after a second crack some seven years later. He's Mr Universal Experience, as in *The Waste Land*, which is just one of hundreds of texts happily plundered for this notebook. He is an engaging and observant scribbler, never sententious, because he commutes his sentences. He also likes puns like that, so be warned. Had he witnessed what I did by the Reading fruit machine, he'd have labelled the above-mentioned gent a platform heel, above his station, and railed against him in sundry other ways.

'Tiresias' crams every inch of his *Notes* with quirky, whimsical and generally mock-sophist remarks — decanting four years on the London-Oxford train into a sequence of squiblets, *pensées* and a mass of perfectly random observations, including some splendid 'overheards'. The best is an invitation from one hearty young man to another: 'Coming for a cup of tea in the buff?' I suspect it may send its many readers out for a notebook, something I seem incapable of keeping for longer than a week. I recommend it; and I wonder what he might have made of a little glimpse I recently had — on the way to the dread Reading Station again — of Auberon Waugh at work. He was slicing slivers of articles out of the *Telegraph* and filing them in innumerable pockets. He was using a penknife to perform his delicate surgery, by the way, not a blunted Bowie. An interesting method; but I'm still working on its symbolism.

*Notes from Overground *by Tiresias (Paladin £2.50)*

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2824 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

It was recently suggested by the teams on *I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue* that Nero's house might well have been called 'Dunromin'. Can we have suitable house names for any celebrity, living or dead, real or fictional, by 15 June?

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No 2821 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Cautionary Tales about Hilaire Belloc or any other deceased author.

Report **By Babe Bio**

Abowt time too, if I may say so. For the last two weeks you've been so per*the*tic I was thinking of drifting back to school, but (except for the muppet who thinks Rod Stewart is a 'deceased author') you seam to have got it together again. A tenner to everyone printed. And sorry there isn't moor space.

The chief defect of Hilaire B,
A trait he shared with GKC,
Was living in the feudal past,
When furniture was made to last,
And peasants who had learnt their place
Were always in a state of grace.

One day, when full of faith and ale,
The author choked upon a snail,
And he was rushed with all due speed
To see a certain Doctor Fried,
Who cut his windpipe with a knife,
A skilful act which saved his life.

But then there came the worst of shocks
(For life is one long paradox),
And Belloc blanched, on coming to,
To learn his saviour was a Jew.

NAOMI MARKS

Frank Harris knew, when he was young,
He would succeed, or else be hung;
And so, to cheat the hangman class,
He grew himself a neck of brass
And cultivated famous men
Who earned their living with the pen.
Young Frank would burn the midnight oil
In sessions at the Cafe Royal,
Where pleasure bubbled rich and hearty
Among the London literati.
But Frank, alas, could not resist
The urge to tell whom he had kissed,
And ended as a falling star
Of *nostalgie de la boudoir*.
The moral is, do not be frank
Unless you've money in the bank.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The sermons preached by Laurence Sterne
Could take a most peculiar Turn,
Which left the Souls attending church
Confused, bemused, and in the Lurch.
A frequent cause of their Despair
Were sentences that stopped mid-air,
Or when he waltzed along the Aisles,
Or spoke of Sin whilst wreathed in Smiles.
At length, as an elaborate Hoax,
He wrote down several of his Jokes,
And, vexed by Psalms and tuneless Hymns,
Became possessed by various Whims,
Like mixing up his Punctuation,
The better to relieve Frustration.
And so those Sermons, thought Berserk,
Were hailed as Literary Work.

WILL BELLENGER

When Mr Burroughs (Edgar Rice
If we are going to be precise)
Set out to write about this bloke
Heir to the glories of Greystoke,
Who, wrecked afar and reared by paw,
And unprepared by Jungle Law
For white man's wiles . . . when, as I say,
He launched this hero on his way,
Did he foresee — and if he had
Would he have scrapped the likely lad? —
How far this figment would outstrip
His author's modest penmanship,
And run amok through screen and stage
To comic strip and tabloid page,
A cartoon figure, mouthing jargon
Ad nauseam: 'You Jane, me Tarzan!'

MARGUERITE KENDRICK

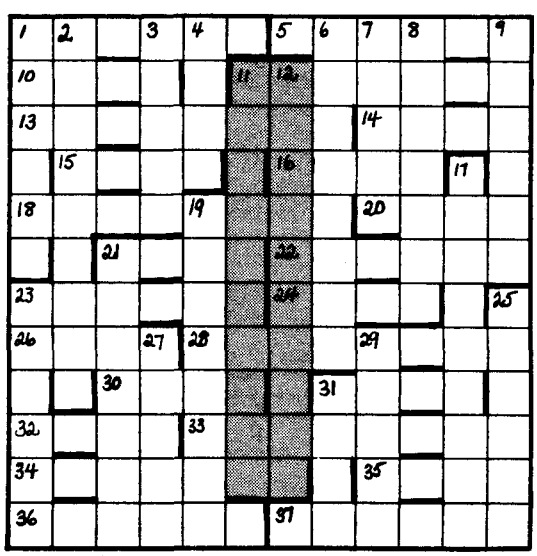
Christopher Marlow (known at Kit)
Grew up to find he didn't fit
His Tudor frame: an atheist,
He found his pleasure getting pissed,
Screwing boys and chewing baccy —
His ways were thought so wild and wacky,
They sent him down from Corpus Christi,.
The times were hard; so, to exist, he
Enrolled with Burghley's MI5-ers
(Then, as now, a bunch of skivers)
Till — supping with one Ingram Frisar
(A Spanish agent in disguise?) — a
Dispute arose about the score,
And Ingram stabbed him to the core.
Moral: before the menu-grab,
Make sure who's picking up the tab.

A.G.D. MCEVOY

Salamanca 82

'Good Game'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 82, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 3 July.



Boundaries, all of six letters, must be located normally in the perimeter of the field. An equal number of overs occurs, each reflecting its opposite partner (E.g. if 13 reads l to r, then 33 reads r to l), and likewise an equal number of wides, bowled from each end, each of these containing an extra unclued letter produced by an across answer, the extra letters spelling out an object. The puzzle may be completed by a possible score being added to the two runs displayed by the shaded area between the wickets which echoes an often-heard statement.

Boundaries:
a) What's inevitable re result, say? Don't play on this!
b) Want to swap sides?
c) Very glad to note Dexter's coming on
d) Takes a turn when energy's left, returns, and takes a rest
e) Refuse to hit the ball in 'test match'?
f) Work of an Australian impossible to beat, no bowler
g) What's a good defence against balls being thrown?
h) Bails sent flying about one? (Good reasons for not being on the scene?)

Overs:
10 Bat wildly with first eleven, second among stars (4)
11 Where to find catcher literally in pursuit of low ball? (A deceptive cookie) (7)
13 One caught — out — by a bowling giant? (Brazilians might play here — but not cricket) (8)
14 With everyone out do not take over — where might the ashes be? (4)
15 Something the bowler does wrong causing disappointment (let slip stop short) (4)
16 Does no longer hit hard (4)
18 What is thrown at pair etc. if not out (8)
20 Get a century in selection match? If this is delivered you won't! (4)
21 Use seam classically as for throwing? Yes (4)
22 Catch alien visitor coming in to make a sort of crease? (6)
23 Will one who makes a run? What a waste! (6)
24 Pair needing special oil, say? (4)
26 These emerge on sides, in the English manner (4)
28 Instruct with style — visitors may travel on it (8)
30 Spotted one with right protection covering (4)
31 As wickets are sent flying askew could be you'ld have convulsions with them (4)
32 Needed in net practice? No cap over the eyes traditionally (4)
33 Knockout stroke — could be a six? (8)
34 Like 'Dee' — angry (losing), time one declared perhaps? (7)
35 Every (according to Denness?) same one (4)

Wides:
2 Note Britain's about to come in play short ball (8)
3 Bad humour shown by black England opener capturing half century almost (4)
4 Such language you get breaking last wicket! (3)
6 See the side that's turned up, say, to plan (7)
7 Like India? I'd come out showing indication of little pressure (4)
8 Landed a duck first when in that is — what a gem! (6)
17 Biographer writing full chapters ignoring self (8)
19 With careful use, see, once removed, this could be what you'ld wish to hold? (7)
21 Clumsy fish getting a boundary containing force in theory (6)
27 Heads of touring eleven receiving award once coming back (4)
29 Finished with hard curve (4)
31 Opportune time to drop second catch difficult to keep hold of (3)

NB: Solutions and prizewinners to Salamanca 81 and Setsquare 1440 appear on p. 34.

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Solution to Salamanca 81

A	S	P	S	T	O	M	B	L	E	S	S
S	K	E	S	C	R	A	N	E	E	M	A
T	I	S	P	Y	A	N	G	E	T	O	R
R	L	S	C	A	N	N	O	N	A	R	K
O	F	A	M	E	L	E	A	R	N	E	D
M	U	S	A	S	E	R	I	A	T	C	H
E	L	C	R	O	S	S	R	O	E	A	L
L	A	D	S	G	R	A	N	A	A	M	O
I	D	A	P	O	T	T	E	R	O	B	I
L	E	D	A	D	I	S	C	R	E	E	T
O	W	L	I	L	S	U	E	S	A	G	E
T	E	E	N	Y	T	P	I	O	U	S	

Unclued answers are variations of 'wise'. The screen 'list' consists of 'Kes, Crane, I-Spy, Angels, Cannon, Fame, Lear, USA, serial, Crossroads, Granada, Potter'.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 81

Chris Feetenby (Leeds)
Mrs J. Loutz (France)
Trevor Ridley (Reading)

Prizewinners to Setsquare 1440

L.M. Keet (London N1)
A.D. Morrison (Edinburgh)
Dan Pawson (Birmingham)

Solution to Setsquare 1440

D	E	F	E	N	D	E	R	■	A	D	O	R	E	S
E	■	O	■	E	■	M	■	S	■	E	■	E	■	T
S	H	R	E	W	M	I	C	E	■	P	I	P	P	A
E	■	U	■	C	■	T	■	R	■	O	■	T	■	G
R	U	M	B	A	■	S	T	A	R	T	L	I	N	G
T	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	G	■	■	■	L	■	E
■	S	E	N	T	I	N	E	L	■	C	R	I	E	R
S	■	N	■	L	■	O	■	I	■	O	■	A	■	S
T	I	T	H	E	■	C	L	O	W	N	I	N	G	■
A	■	E	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	R
F	O	R	E	C	O	U	R	T	■	E	L	I	T	E
F	■	T	■	R	■	R	■	A	■	N	■	S	■	W
O	M	A	H	A	■	N	I	L	E	D	E	L	T	A
R	■	I	■	N	■	E	■	O	■	E	■	I	■	R
D	I	N	N	E	R	■	I	N	T	R	E	P	I	D

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OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone *Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy)*, Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

DORA RUSSELL urgently needs housekeeper in Cornwall. Light duties but commitment essential. Couple considered. Terms by arrangement. For details phone Mrs Ward 0787-210980 after 27 May.

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This experience will have been gained at a senior level in a Social Services Department, but not necessarily as an Assistant Director.

Informal enquiries should be directed, in the first instance, to Trudi Marshall, telephone 01-278 4444 ext 2343.

Application forms and further details from, and to be returned to, Controller of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1 2RU, or telephone 01-278 4444 ext 2760, quoting ref no. 10/158/NS.

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'THE POLITICS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA': Psychiatric Oppression in the United States'. David Hill (0981 540 042). 577p. EUROSPAN (01-240 0856). £18.95/£27.95.

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APPOINTMENTS

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GROUPS/ MEETINGS

SOCIALISTS NEED awareness of Fifth Natural Kingdom's assistance to the Fourth (Humanity). Talks and questions Medhope. Tintern (02918 253) Gwent. Next weekend 8/10 June.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 3 June 8 p.m. 'Theosophy and Education'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

WANT MORE than Labour's re-election in 1988? — Come to *'Preparing for Power'*! 13-20 July, Polytechnic of Central London. Sessions include: Kinnock's party, Benn's left, Alexandra Kollontai, fascism today, war, sex and revolution. Registration £12 (£8 UB40), creche, accommodation and brochure (30p) available from BM, Revolutionary Communist Party, London WC1N 3XX, 'phone 01-274 3951.

German Historical Institute, London
Thurs. 7 June, 5 pm
Prof. Dr Gerhard A. Ritter (Munich)
Social Security in Germany and Britain. Its origins and characteristics in comparative perspective.
17 Bloomsbury Square London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts 5 p.m.

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WANTED

ACADEMIC COUPLE require London rental last 2 weeks July. References available. Prof. Gordon U-68 Storrs, Connecticut 06268, USA. Tel. 203429 3834.

WANTED TO RENT: House in London for month of August for visiting academic and family (2 small children). Like to look after house while owner on holiday. Will feed pets, mow lawns. Prefer quiet street, within easy travelling distance of Russell Square. Tel. Burgess, Australia (02) 43-1705 before 1 July.

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LISTINGS

FRI 1 JUNE

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE Days of Hope Bookshop Dance & Social. 8pm Guildhall, Quayside, Newcastle. Brighton Palais Orchestra, the Big Band, the Wobblies. Tickets from Days of Hope, 115 Westgate Rd and on door. £2.50/£1.25 unwaged.

ACTON Jumble Sale. 6.30pm Old People's Luncheon Club, Acton High St, W3. Details: 01-993 3240. **Org Acton CND.**

SAT 2 JUNE

LONDON 1984 National Homeworking Conf. — International Perspectives, Trade Unions, work of local projects. Day conf. County Hall, SE1. **Details: 01-633 1493.**

ISLINGTON 'Barrio Latino', Latin American food/bar. 7-12pm Islington Town Hall. £3. **Bookings 01-359 2270. Colombian Cttee-Carila.**

LONDON 2nd Pam Smith Memorial Lecture by Sue Holland 'Loss, Rage and Oppression', neighbourhood psychotherapy with working-class, black and minority women. 2pm Poly of N London, Ladbroke Hse, 62-66 Highbury Grove, N5. £1/50p unwaged. Tea/creche. **Details: Esther Saraga 01-607 2789/Sue Einhorn 01-607 2789.**

LONDON Conference on European Socialist Strategy. 'No to the Treaty of Rome, No to British Nationalism, Yes to a united Socialist Europe!' Spkrs include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Fred Halliday, John Palmer. £3 pre-reg/£4 on day/£1 unwaged. Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, N19. Creche, refreshments. 10.30-5pm. **Details: Socialist Society, 9 Poland St, W1, 01-734 8501.**

LONDON 'No to Botha! No to apartheid!' Assemble 11.45 Speakers Corner to march to Whitehall and Downing St. **Org Anti-Apartheid Movement.**

LONDON Benefit for Miners' Families. The Venture Centre, Wornington Rd, N. Kensington, W10. 7.30pm. Entertainment, bar, NUM spkr. **Org Kensington Trades Council, Kensington Labour Party, Kensington Communist Party.**

LONDON A Concert for EELAM. In aid of Tamil refugees of Sri Lanka. Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St, WC1. 7.30pm. With Sound Circus, Ebony and Kala Anjali. £3.00.

LETCHWORTH Herts. 'Ecology and the Labour Movement'. Spkr Raymond Williams. 3pm Plinston Hall, The Broadway, Letchworth. **Org N. Herts SERA.**

SUN 3 JUNE

LONDON *Presenting the Land Question* — a workshop for writers and speakers. GLC County Hall, SE1. 11am-4pm. **Org Labour Land Campaign 01-267 2245.**

WEMBLEY A Night for a Nuclear-Free Europe. 7.30pm Wembley Conference Centre. Supported by the Socialist Group of the European Parliament. With Tracey Ullman, Julie Walters, Rik Mayall, Aswad & many others. **Org Labour Movement Services. Enquiries 01-267 6722.**

MON 4 JUNE

LONDON Beatrix Campbell speaks about her new book *Wigan Pier Revisited — Poverty & Politics in the '80s.* Caxton House, St John's Way, N19. 8pm. **Org Marxism Today/N Islington CP.**

LONDON 'The Defence of Britain. . . without nuclear weapons'. Public mtg. Spkrs Mike Gapes, Labour Party Defence Researcher; Prof Michael Pentz, CND & SANA; Stan Windass, Co-Director 'Just Defence'; Anita Pollack, Labour Euro-candidate. 7.30pm. Lola Jones Hall, off Garratt Lane, SW17. **Org Tooting CND.**

WED 6 JUNE

LONDON Food and Health — public mtg with workshops and displays starts at City University, Northampton Sq, EC1. Continues 7 and 8. **Details: SAE City & Hackney CHC, Kingsland Rd, E2. 01-739 6308.**

THUR 7 JUNE

LONDON 'Unemployment, volunteering and the Government' ARVAC Seminar 2-6pm National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakeley St, EC1. Fee £3.50/£4.50 non-mems/£2 unwaged. **Details & enrolment: Pat Marsden, ARVAC, 26 Queen's Rd, Wivenhoe, Essex CO7 9JH. 0206 225344.**

LONDON Public meeting of Muswell Hill CND. Spkr Rebecca Johnson from Greenham Common 8pm. Coffee available from 7.30. Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, Muswell Hill, N10. Free. **Contact: Jane Morley 01-889 0571.**

LONDON 'Race Today in Britain', spkr Darcus Howe. 6.30pm Jeffery Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1. Free. **Org Africa Centre & Centre for Multicultural Education.**

LONDON 'Reagan on Trial' for crimes against humanity and endangering world peace. 6.30pm (doors open 6pm). Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. Judges inc John Platt-Mills QC. Prosecution Lord Gifford QC. Expert witnesses. Exhibitions, stalls, snacks. £1.00.

LONDON 'Whose world, whose economy, whose summit?' Revolutionary Communist Party public mtg on the Reagan visit. 7.30 at The Roebuck, Tottenham Ct Rd, W1 (nr Goodge St tube). **Details: 01-274 3951.**

LONDON First International Feminist Book Fair opens. Jubilee Hall, Covent Garden, WC2. 5-7pm. Over 100 publishers' stands from 23 countries displaying radical books by women. 50p/25p. Creche, translators. **Details: 01-837 9666.**

LONDON 'Who Reviews Women's Books — And How?' Spkrs Susan Griffin, Gerd Brantenberg, Uvashu Butalia; chair Alison Hennegan. 8pm The Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, WC1. £3/£2. Feminist Book Fair opening forum.

FRI 8 JUNE

LONDON Benefit concert for El Salvador & Guatemala. 7pm at Inst. Ed., Logan Hall, Bedford Way, WC1. Isabel Parra, Patricio Castillo, Barricada, Leon Rosselson & friends. £6, £4.50 (some £2.50 unwaged) at door or from ESCHR/GCHR, 20 Compton Terr, N1. **Org El Salvador & Guatemala Committee for Human Rights.**

LONDON First International Feminist Book Fair continues. 10am-7pm. As 7 June.

LONDON International Lesbian Writers' Celebration. 8pm The Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, WC1. With Audre Lorde, Suniti Namjoshi, Gerd Brantenberg, Giovanna Tato. Chair Gillian Hanscombe. Creche. Women only. £3/£2.

SAT 9 JUNE

LONDON First international Feminist Book Fair last day. 10am-6pm. As 7 June.

LONDON Black & Third World Women Writers' Evening. 8pm at St Matthew's Meeting House Theatre, Brixton Hill, SW2. Maureen Watson, Jester Tshuma, Ellen Kuzwayo, Fatima-Zara Salah, Rosa Guy, Barbara Smith, Madhu Kishwar, Nawal el Saadawi. Chair Gail Lewis. £2/£1.50.

LONDON 'Return to Sender'. Protest Reagan's nuclear policies. March from Hyde Park at 12 noon to Trafalgar Sq 2pm. Peaceful encirclement of US embassy 12-3pm. **Details: CND 01-263 0977.**

LONDON Language, Communication and the Media — a workshop in peace education. 10-4.30. Quakers International Centre, Byng Place, London WC1. £5. **Org Quaker Peace and Service, Pax Christi, Peace Education Project.**

LONDON Workshop to produce Anti-Racist teaching materials. Of interest to teachers in FE and AE, YTS and schools. Bring materials. 10-4pm Paddington College, Paddington Green, W2.

BIRMINGHAM Labour Party Black Sections, one-day conf. to discuss draft constitution for black sections to represent all black people in Labour Party. 10.30am Digbeth Civic Hall. **Details: 39 Chippenham Rd, London, W9. 01-286 9692/221 7050.**

SUN 10 JUNE

GARTREE Picket in support of and in solidarity with Irish Republican prisoners in Gartree Prison, 1-3pm.

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ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man (58), loves arts, seeks attractive, sensual non-smoking woman, slim/medium (any age to 53), any race circumstances for warm friendship/enjoyments. Pref. London/surrounding areas. Box 8080.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL woman, 32, seeks intelligent, amusing man for theatre, cinema, dining etc. Photo essential. Manchester. Box 8474.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM divorcee, 36, professional, wide interests outdoor, arts, people, cheerful caring personality, wonders if there's someone tallish, sensitive, intelligent and stable out there. Box 8456.

BASICALLY CHEERFUL North London man, early fifties, seeks lady friend to share a joke or two and possibly a few other life enhancing activities. Box 8446.

BRUISED BUT NOT BEATEN: sex war casualty still hopes for fraternisation. Academic (f.), single, 29, good-looking, drinks, smokes, jokes, seeks male company (28-45), witty, clever, handsome, honest (o.n.o.), Oxford-M40-London. Box 8389.

CAMBRIDGE GRADUATE, warm, male, forties, happily tied to tolerant partner, seeks intelligent woman companion, possibly similarly placed, for mutually agreeable explorations. South London/Kent. Box 8452.

CARIBBEAN GRADUATE wishes to meet a genuine *literate* female, under 40, with varied social interests — sport, dancing, Continental travelling, wine bars. Box 8480.

CREATIVE PROFESSIONAL man, sceptical, funny, seeks warm, attractive female, 25-35, Inner London, to share interest in wine, music, travel, general dottiness. Photo appreciated. Box 8466.

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FRIENDLY MALE, 30, socialist, hopefully non sexist, likes music, travel, ecology, laughs, health, countryside, cycling, Ken Livingstone, seeks companionable female. London based. Box 8464.

HOLIDAY IN FRANCE. Bourgeois Gentilhomme, non socialist, seeks lively, sophisticated lady, forties, to share leisurely 2/3 week car tour through French countryside this summer. Box 8396.

LESBIAN FEMINIST socialist, thirties, intelligent, educated political activist, seeks others interested in exploring contradictions between hedonistic enjoyment and serious politics. Box 8465.

LONDON MAN, 45, once-married, who enjoys Mozart's operas and life in general, seeks leftish, childfree, articulate, non-smoking woman, for mutual life-enhancement. Box 8448.

LONELY DOCTOR, 35-45 male, sought by very attractive young woman colleague, fun-loving but working too hard, to share good times, music, friendship/marriage. Box 8447.

MALE ACADEMIC, 38, recently divorced, enjoys good conversation, jazz etc., non-smoker, seeks uncomplicated but caring friendship with non-intense, like-minded NS female — or couple. Preferably North West but can travel. Box 8477.

MALE STUDENT, 24, emotional problems, but sincere, seeks warm and loving woman, who can be a stabilising influence. Exams approaching, someone help me please! Reciprocity of care assured. Box 8468.

MALE TEACHER, 33, *would like to meet good* natured, humorous woman, 30-40, for sincere, stimulating friendship. Photo appreciated but not essential. Box 8457.

MATURE STUDENT, 32, black, average intelligence, warm-hearted, feels lonely & shy, music & outings lover, seeks sensitive, sincere, understanding woman for friendship & romance etc., 20-35, any nationality. Photo & tel. no please. Box 8475.

MY DEAR FRIEND, professional woman, 30, recently moved to Bristol, wishes to meet sensitive, genuine man. Interests include: travel, music, theatre, food and gardening. Box 8453.

NORTHERN ENGINEER, Cambridge graduate, 50+, Fit and able, but presently more or less penniless, — seeks long term relationship with younger career orientated woman. Happy to take on 'reverse rôle'. Good at maintenance etc. All replies answered. Box 8440.

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PLEASANT, LIVELY and affectionate male friend (50+), sought by vulnerable professional woman, seeking new start and shortly moving to Wye Valley. Box 8485.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN *London, mid-*forties, seeks professional man, sense humour, share arts, cinema, classical music, travel, wining, dining. Box 8273.

RESPECTABLE, ATTRACTIVE, well-educated woman, 40s, unattached, living North London, would like to meet professional, educated Englishman, 40+, for sincere, lasting relationship. Box 8486.

SINGLE FEMALE, early 30s, petite, quiet, *caring, interests: reading, travel, countryside,* seeks single male, 30s, seriously interested in marriage/family life. North West. Box 8463.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST *academic, interests:* politics, theatre, literature, seeks like-minded male (30-45) London. Box 8426.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE — male lecturer, 29, seeks loving girlfriend to share the joys and pleasures of life. Interests: wining, dining, music and the countryside. Box 8454.

TALL MALE, 46, energetic, prosperous, intellectual, very busy, sense of humour, widower, dramatic life but stable personality, warm, kind, active in charity work, left-of-centre, wide range of interests incl. theatre, cinema, dining out, classical music. Needs warm, attractive, stable (fairly) successful, sensual, intelligent (30-50) lady, view marriage. Photo and phone number appreciated. No prejudices. Box 8455.

TALL, SLIM black guy, 25, enjoys theatre and cinema, seeks lady, age, size, nationality unimportant Box 8424.

TWO FRIENDS (male 58, female 50), attractive professional people, interests in the arts, seek couple for friendship and exploration of common interests. London/surrounding areas. Box 8194.

UNATTACHED MALE, 28, likes music, food, films, laughs theatre, would like to meet similar aged female for relationship which might be lasting. Surrey/SE London. Box 8449.

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VERY ATTRACTIVE woman, 34, socialist, interests: politics, trade unionism, theatre, film, music, opera, seeks attractive, out-going, interesting man for caring relationship. London area. Box 8410.

VIRGIN SWINGER, male, 28, left-wing, tall, slim, beardless, seeks singles/couples for fun, talk, trips to pub, theatre, cinema. Leicester area. Box 8451.

WOMAN, 30, leftish, interests from the political to the purely self-indulgent, seeks man to share fun times and quiet times. Essex/Suffolk/London. Box 8450.

YOUNG HOMOSEXUAL (23), dislikes gay scene, affectionate, intelligent, interested *literature, classical music, countryside, seeks* gentle, civilised man (over 21) for friendship. London & Scotland based. Box 8364.

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